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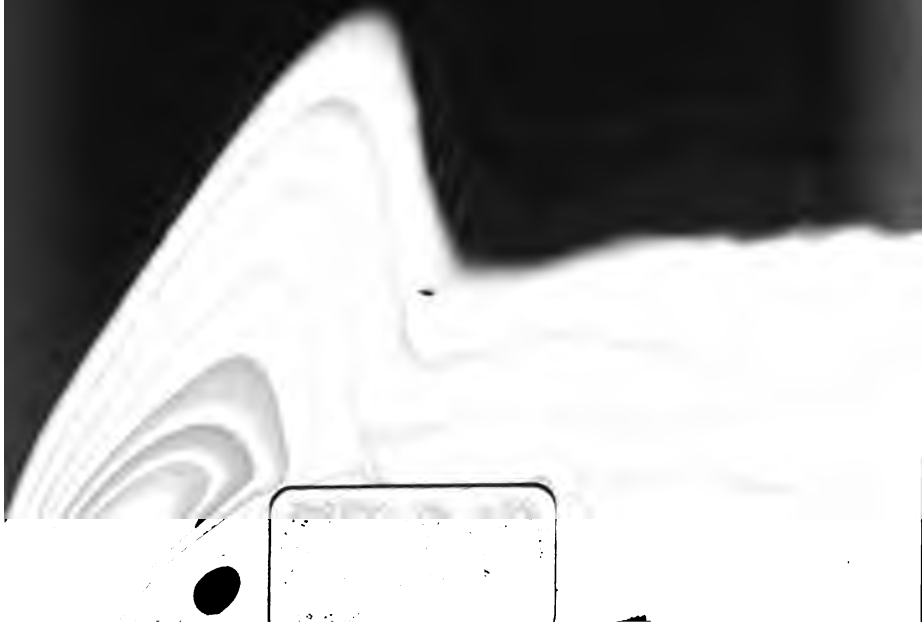
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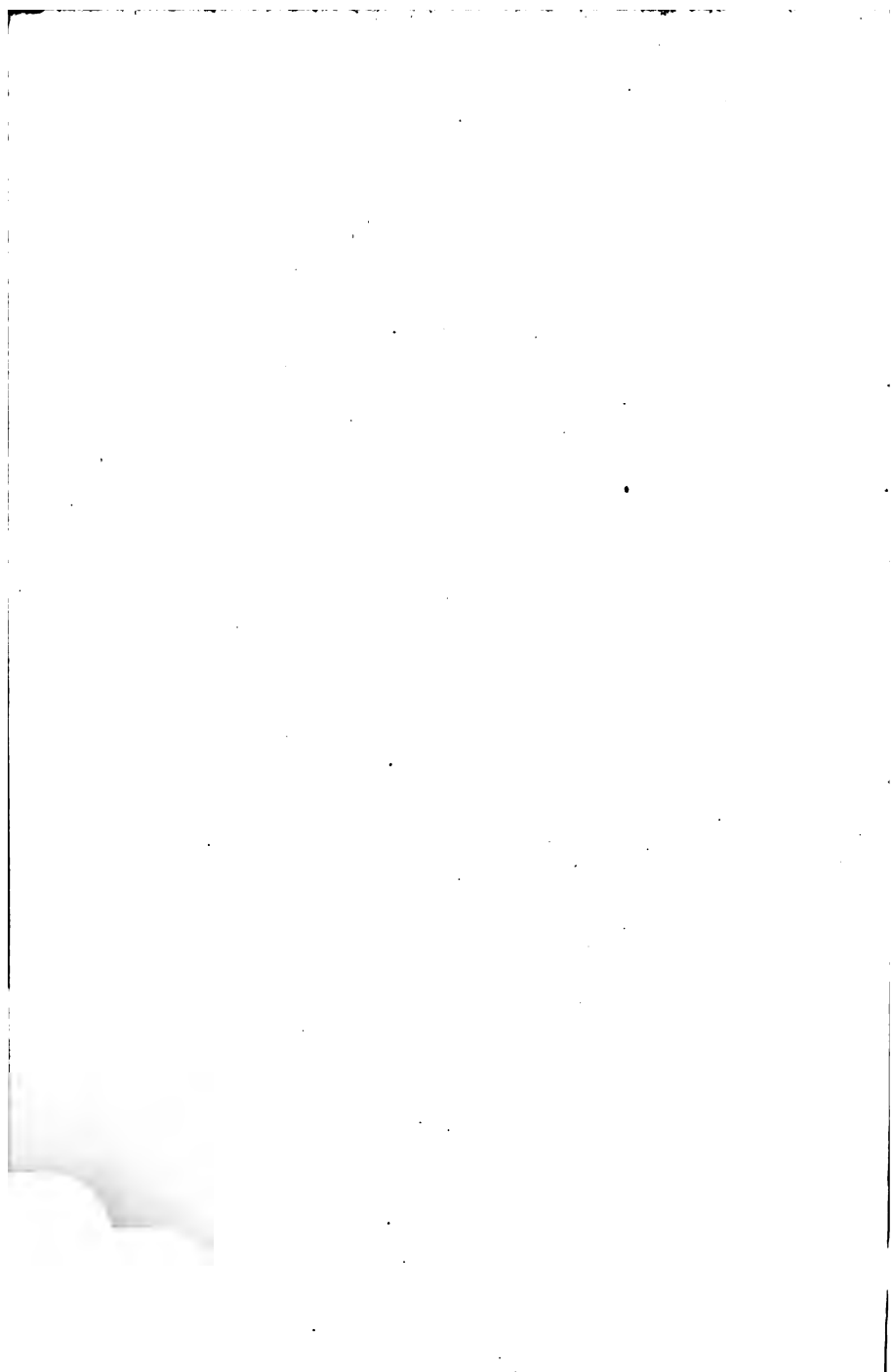
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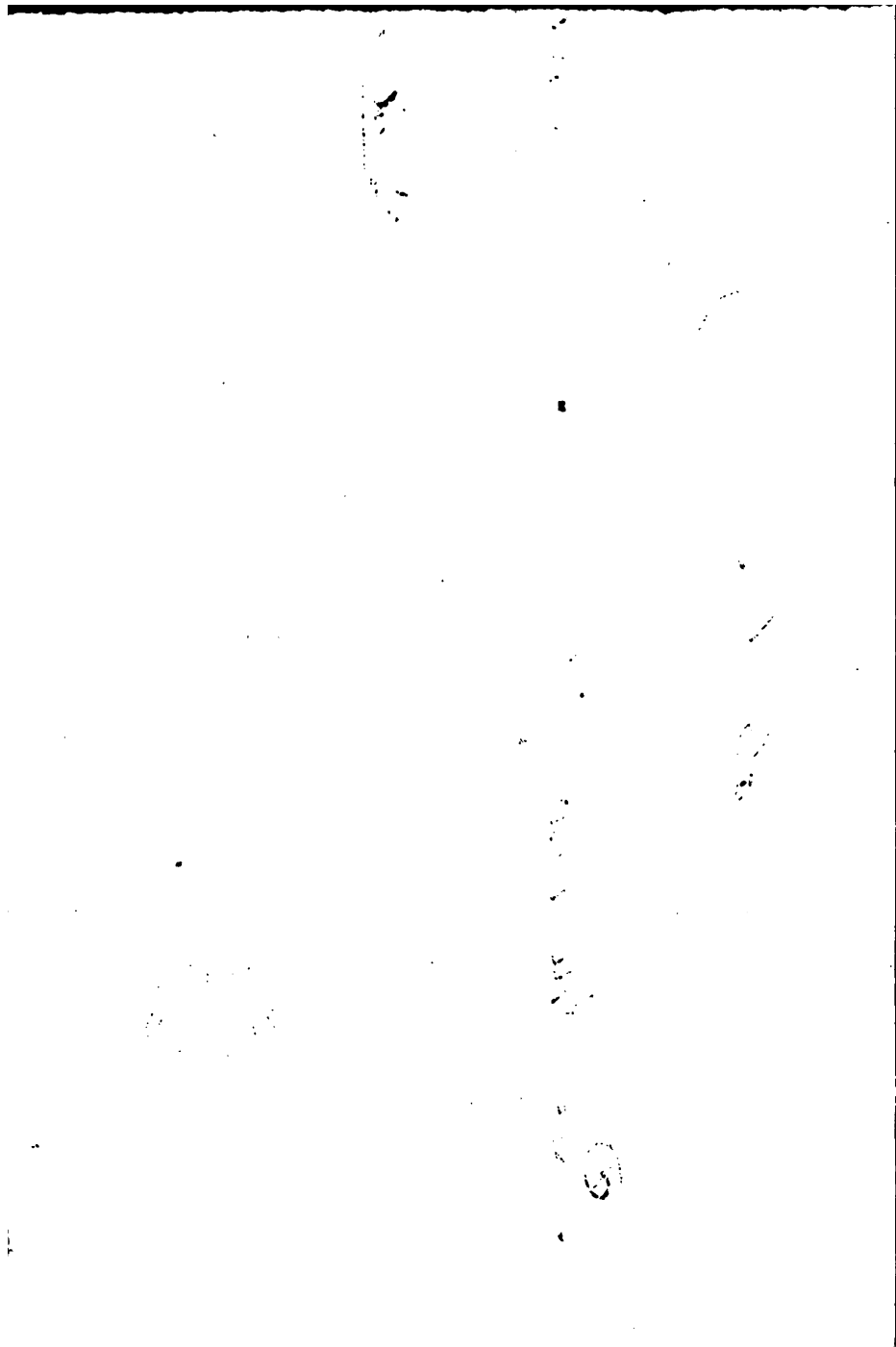
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ROSE MERVYN OF WHITELAKE.

VOL. I.



ROSE MERVYN,

OF WHITELAKE.

BY

ANNE BEALE,

AUTHOR OF

“FAY ARLINGTON,” “THE PENNANT FAMILY,”

“THE MILLER’S DAUGHTER,”

&c., &c.

Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have won
A tearful grace, as though you stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.

TENNYSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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ROSE MERVYN OF WHITELAKE.

CHAPTER I.

LLANSANT TURNPIKE.

“**H**ULLO there, Madoc, corporal!
Hullo, Letty! Name o’ goodness,
where are you? Gate! gate! How long
are you going to keep us waiting this
blessed market day? Madoc! Letty!
Gate!”

These exclamations were made by a number of peasants at the turnpike of Llansant. They had previously tried to open the gate, and found it locked.

“What a row you are keeping! Can’t you let me just fasten my hat, and my head

like a windmill with the rheumatics?" cried a querulous voice through the small lattice window of the gate-house.

A gaunt old woman appeared at the door shortly afterwards. She was in Welsh costume, her linsey skirts well gathered up, and the high, conical hat firmly set upon her full-bordered cap.

"Have you been dressing for Wynne Manorsant's ball, Letty, corporal?" cried one of the expectants.

"No, she's been putting on her best hat for Rebecca," said another; "she's expected here 'rectly minute. She 'ont be standing losing her time like us. A word and a blow, and down go the pikes, like nine-pins."

"Open the gate, quick, Letty *fach*, and maybe Llansant pike will be spared," shouted a third.

Letty looked through her gate, and was astonished at the crowd. It seemed as if all Llansant parish had made an appoint-

ment there. She had never seen so many bipeds and quadrupeds collected on one side of it before, excepting on a Hollantide Fair day.

“Pay you the toll, and I’ll open fast enough,” she said. “Madoc ordered me to lock the gate till he came back. He’ll be here in a twinkling. Stop you there, Nanno, Tybach; you’re not going to carry that pig through wi’out paying. Shame for you to be cheating like a ‘torney.’”

But Nanno, a woman with a scarlet cloak and very high hat, boldly walked through the side gate with her pig under her arm. There was a general shout, and much laughter, while the pig squeaked, the dogs began to bark in concert, and the donkeys in the little coal-carts pricked their ears. It was a scene as amusing as it was picturesque and characteristic.

The turnpike was situated in a lonely road, close by a rapid river that foamed and fretted over great stones beneath high

rocks half covered with brushwood. On the side opposite the river was a plantation of larch, beyond and above which were wild hills, almost mountains. On these hills, as Letty knew but too well, the Rebecca fires had begun to blaze at night, and one of them had more than once appeared on the great carn above the turnpike.

While she was considering what to do, a young man on horseback rode in amongst the little crowd, and, in his turn, shouted "Gate!"

Letty and a dozen others explained the state of affairs, amid jests and laughter.

"I don't wonder that you are frightened, Letty," said the young man. "But Madoc is brave enough for fifty Rebeccas. Only last night the turnpike at Mountain Ash was destroyed, house and all, and I have just now ridden through it. There was nobody to take toll, so here's the sixpence for you. I'm in a hurry, so let me through."

Thus saying he threw the coin on the ground.

“Stop you a minute, Mr. Alfred, and Madoc ’ll be back,” said perplexed Letty, who alone knew that her husband had the key of the gate in his pocket.

“You have no right to keep us waiting,” returned the young man, angrily; but he paused as Madoc appeared at some distance on one side the turnpike, and a female figure on the other.

He glanced at the latter, while the peasants began to abuse the former at the top of their voices. But Madoc, the corporal, did not hurry; indeed he could not, for he had a wooden leg, having lost his natural limb at the battle of Waterloo. He was also fabled to have an iron heart, and a will as inflexible as that of the Great Duke himself.

“Don’t make such a clatter, but pay your toll,” he cried, stumping up. “Letty, hold you the gate ajar,” he added, coolly

taking the key from his pocket and unlocking it. "Tell you Rebecca that I'm no more afraid of her than I was of Bonyparte eight-and-twenty years ago. I locked the gate, Mr. Alfred, because three men on horseback galloped through this morning without paying toll, and they're not going to do that again, I can tell 'em."

Mr. Alfred was apparently indifferent, for he was still looking back at the approaching female figure. He was a fine man, and sat his horse well. His surname was Johnnes. He had a bold, resolute face and manner, and the peasants around him held him in some awe, while they admired his daring and laughed at his frolics.

While Madoc took the toll, the people grumbled amongst themselves, and said, "It was high time that Rebecca or some one should put down the pikes; for they couldn't go for a donkey-load of coal or bring home a sucking pig from market

without paying two or three, and they couldn't find money for the tax, so they must soon go without bacon or fire."

Indeed, there was some reason for their grievance, since turnpikes were unnecessarily multiplied in country districts, and the peasantry could not afford to pay the toll. Hence the Rebecca Riots, which were terrifying and astonishing the Cambrian world at the period when this tale commences. The rioters, being anxious to give their Bible-reading countrymen a text as their apology, chose the 60th verse of the 24th chapter of Genesis as their motto, and from it derived their title, also—"And they blessed *Rebekah*, and said unto her, Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the *gate* of those which hate them."

But Madoc, the corporal, insisted on the uttermost farthing, nevertheless, and would not let the malcontents through till they had paid. Not that they openly expressed

discontent, they were too wise for that; they only laughed in their sleeves, or whispered to one another, as the gates yielded to Rebecca and her daughters, in their motley costume.

Mr. Alfred Johnnes was the last to pass through the gate, though he had been the first to pay the toll. He tarried to have a talk with Madoc, and to discuss the last news concerning the insurrection. Meanwhile, the peasants, with their market-carts, coal-carts, and various animals, wound down the hill and round the projecting rock at its base, in the direction of the hamlet of Llansant; and the woman who had attracted Alfred Johnnes' attention reached the turnpike.

"Good evening, Miss Mervyn. You are late," he said, raising his hat, and bending low in his saddle.

"Bless you, Miss Rose, how fast you are walking! Your legs 'ould be worth a hundred a year to me," exclaimed Madoc.

“But then two’s better than one, all the world over.”

“And she looks as cool and white as a turnip all the same. Heat nor haste don’t bring the colour to her cheeks,” said Letty.

“Good evening, Mr. Alfred. Letty, how is Egain?” said the person thus addressed, passing through the gate.

“Come you in and see, Miss *fach*,” replied Letty, and Rose Mervyn disappeared within the tiny house, while Alfred Johnnes still stopped to gossip with Madoc.

His eyes followed Rose, nevertheless, and seemed to try to penetrate the gloom into which she vanished.

“Bless her heart, she looks as shy and frightened as a hare,” said Madoc. “There’s kind she is to our poor, bed-ridden Egain! She’s no more like her mother than chalk’s like cheese. Mrs. Mervyn is a grand lady; but she takes after her father, who’s every inch a Welshman.”

“I think her quite as grand a lady as her mother,” returned Alfred, touching his horse so that he moved through the turnpike, and enabled him to see into the tiny abode tenanted by Madoc, his wife and daughter.

This consisted of one room, with a gaudily-papered screen at the end, which shut out from observation a bed on which lay Egain, the daughter aforesaid. It was marvellously smart and neat, and was the admiration and place of rendezvous of all the young folk in the neighbourhood, who liked to hear the corporal fight his battles over again with the sharp sword of his somewhat trenchant tongue.

The walls were covered with a patchwork of bright papers and brighter pictures, so that they were quite an exhibition of works of art. There was a large cupboard-bedstead in one corner, and a glass cupboard, full of every imaginable ornament, silver spoons, and china, in the other. The

chimney, fire-place, grate, even the red-hot "balls" were whitewashed; the window-frames painted blue. There were two tiny lattice-windows, one looking out upon the gate, the other on the rocks and river; and on their sills were flower-pots rejoicing in a scarlet coat. Old Madoc's sword hung over the fireplace, and beneath it his Waterloo medal, duly framed and glazed. The aspect of the room was supremely cheerful, and not the least cheerful element was the girl who lay within the flowery screen, beneath a patchwork quilt of every colour of the rainbow.

It was to her that Rose went, and she was soon concealed by the screen.

"I cannot stay a minute, Egain," she said. "Mr. Alfred Johnnes is outside. I wish he would ride on."

"He won't hurt you, Miss Rose," laughed Egain, colouring and letting fall a stocking that she was knitting. "What would you say if you was to have such an

anonymous letter as father had last night? It was pushed under the door. 'Take no toll, or you had better remove Egain,' was written inside. But Rebecca isn't wicked enough to burn me, whatever, and I'm not afraid. Still she is very wicked."

"We have had threatening letters too," replied Rose, "and I think them very cowardly. Old Mr. Wynne is frightened, for you know he is very nervous. They dug his grave last night in the park, and I shuddered as I passed it by."

"He won't fill it a bit the sooner. But make you haste home, Miss Rose, and never you mind Mr. Alfred," said Egain, glancing out of the window. "He is gone. He was there by the lattice a few minutes ago."

But Mr. Alfred was only out of sight; and when Rose re-appeared at the door he had dismounted, and was evidently waiting for her.

She stood a moment outside the thres-

hold to re-arrange her broad-brimmed straw hat, which she had knocked against the door-frame. She was tall, and had forgotten to stoop as usual as she went out. She was young and slim, with a white face, delicate features, shy grey eyes, and hair and brows almost black. Although dressed in the simplest of blue print gowns, and a loose jacket of the same material, she had a distinguished air and carriage which were perfectly natural to her. She was about to hurry on with a hasty "Good evening," when Alfred Johnnes said he was going her way, and would accompany her. She replied that she would on no account delay him; but he was not to be put off, and walked beside her, leading his horse, Madoc muttering as they went down the hill, "As good-looking a couple as ever I saw. I wonder if that would please Madam Mervyn."

"What does your father think about

Rebecca, Miss Mervyn?" asked the young man.

"I scarcely know," replied Rose.

"I suppose he winks at her, like the rest of us?" he suggested, interrogatively, but received no answer, for the girl was either so shy or so proud that she had seldom many words at command. "I hear," he continued, with a chuckle, "that she is in twenty places at once, and that people say she is the Evil One himself. His satanic majesty must be complimented."

He alluded to the superstition of the ignorant, fostered by the leaders of the riots, who tried to make the world believe they were aided by unseen powers.

"Those who say and do such things will be punished," replied Rose.

"Ha, ha! It is a good joke anyhow. Did you see the Squire's grave as you came along?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, shortly and haughtily.

"I hear he has had an attack of the palsy ever since, and shakes like an aspen leaf; while the young squire bullies and blusters more than ever. How do you like teaching those young imps of his?"

"Very well, thank you."

"It is a long way for you to walk twice a-day. How do you like Mrs. Wynne? She is grand enough for anyone, though she has no family to boast of."

"Very well, thank you. Good evening."

At this point of the dialogue they reached a stile, which led from the main road into the meadows. Rose was over it like a fawn, before he could let go the bridle he was holding. He stood by the wild river, with its towering background of rocks, to look after her. At the foot of the hill lay the village of Llansant, which she might have passed through had she chosen; but she preferred the by-way apparently. He watched her till she was out of sight, muttering,

“The white rose is whiter and colder than ever to-day. But I have no time for fooling; I must be home by supper time, or mother will have a stroke. Ha! ha!”

He mounted his horse, and rode full gallop through the village, over the bridge, and onwards to his home at Glynglâs, the Blue Glen, where he knew that his aged and doting mother was looking for him. He was her only child, and she was a widow, and they managed between them a small but compact property, half manor, half farm, which had been in their family for some generations; they also rented largely of Mr. Wynne; and Alfred Johnnes was accounted as clever and prosperous as he was daring and unscrupulous. All the villagers turned out to look after him, as his horse's hoofs clattered through the hamlet, and, “There's wild he is!” was the general exclamation.

CHAPTER II.

THE WHITE LAKE.

“ I WISH he wouldn't persist in walking with me. It makes mother so angry !” soliloquised Rose, as she sped over the flowery grass.

When she had rapidly crossed two or three meadows, all of which sloped towards the mountains, and were, indeed, almost one with them, she reached a lake which lay embosomed amid hills and trees. That remnant of the ancient British called a coracle was moored by its brink, and she got into it. Slipping the rope from the stone that held it, and taking up the paddles, she was soon on the water. Although

the lake was accounted bottomless by the ignorant and superstitious, she was not afraid, for she and her brother and sister had been accustomed to paddle about upon it from their childhood. The curious wicker-work boat, with its case of thick leather, was looked upon as a plaything by the family, and enabled them to make, so to say, a short cut to their house. But for it Rose must have taken a longer circuit through the village and up the mountain road which led to her home, and so have been compelled to continue in company with Alfred Johnnes.

She was never happier than when alone on Llyngwyn or the White Lake. She knew that she was called the white rose of Llyngwyn, and somehow identified herself with the lake. But she did not know that many a *penyll* or stanza had been already composed in her honour by her poetic and music-loving neighbours. The coracle is not easy of management, and

soon topples over in unskilled hands; but she was as clever at paddling as the fishermen who use it in the dangerous mountain rivers which the more modern bark cannot navigate. So she was soon in the middle of the lake, beneath the golden sunset which flooded the gorse-covered mountains and lingered lovingly on the lonely water.

“It will soon be Midsummer eve, and mother has promised to let me watch for the White Lady,” she said, or rather thought. “I would give all I possess to see her once. I can almost imagine her yonder, rowing in her golden boat with her golden oar at the witching hour of midnight, when all the fairies are abroad. Oh! if mother and father were but better suited, what a heavenly world this would be! Even those tormenting children would be bearable, though I fear I shall never learn how to manage them. I have tried hard, and failed. But dear Mr. Edwardes says, ‘Try again.’”

Mr. Edwardes was the pastor of the parish.

Rose Mervyn was as wild and romantic as the country in which she was born, and would have loved to dream away her life, if circumstances had let her ; but she was already beginning to learn that "life is real," and to puzzle over its strange problems.

As she neared the opposite side of the lake she saw that her father was watching for her, and when she reached it he was ready to moor her coracle.

"Here you are then, once more, my girl," he said in Welsh. "How did the great folk treat you to-day?"

"I only saw the children and the nurse, father," she replied.

"You have no business there. It is a mistake" he muttered. And she was almost of the same opinion.

Mr. Mervyn, or Mervyn Llynhafod, as he was called, was a singularly handsome

man. Rose inherited much of her peculiar beauty from him. He was tall and well-built, had features finely cut, and a head covered with the sort of curly hair attributed to an Adonis. Although verging on fifty, he had lost none of his good looks, though he certainly took no pains to preserve them, but rather prided himself on inattention to personal appearance.

As he swung along the path by the lake with Rose at his side, no one would have imagined them father and daughter; for he was so carelessly attired that he had scarcely the appearance of a gentleman, while she looked the lady. None the less were they much attached to one another, and, as yet, Rose had never been tempted to be ashamed of her father despite his appearance and assumption of rough manners, and she hoped that she never should be.

They reached Llynhafod almost immediately. This was a small picturesque

house, gabled and thatched, which looked upon the lake, and had a garden in front. It was, like the lake, embosomed in hills, and its neighbourhood boasted numerous remains of the days when the Welsh were, what they still claim to be, ancient Britons. There were the ruins of an abbey on the lake, and an old British encampment on one of the hills, so that Llynhafod as well as its White Rose was cradled in romance. Like Glynglâs, Alfred Johnnes's place, it united country-house and farm ; but it belonged to the lord of the manor, and not to Mr. Mervyn, who was only a tenant at will.

Rose told her father what she had heard of Rebecca, what Alfred Johnnes had said concerning her and her followers, and what she had seen in the park.

“She won't hurt me, Rose. I have to pay too many pikes to set my face against her ; though, of course, I look solemn

enough when the Squire talks. Ha, ha! dug his grave, have they? And what did Johnnes say?"

"He laughed most unfeelingly."

Mr. Mervyn laughed also. He was an easy-going man, and let things take their course. One thorn in his side was enough for him, he said, or rather thought, and he did his best to stick no other there.

This thorn was awaiting him when he and Rose entered the house. It was his wife. She and his younger daughter, Edwyna, were seated at the tea-table, and, to all appearance, were expecting to welcome them. They were in a pretty parlour, furnished with the comforts and some of the elegancies of life. Yet there was no pretension, and no extravagance. There were a few water-colour drawings on its walls, and some choice flowers on the table. It was simple, but tasteful.

"Have you wiped your shoes, Mr. Mer-

vyn? Rose, I trust Virginie was not familiar," said the wife and mother, as Mervyn and Rose entered.

"No," was the answer to both questions, and Mr. Mervyn went out and made so much noise on the door-mat that his wife frowned, and his children could not repress a smile. His dirty shoes were a sore trouble to his wife.

It must be confessed that he took pleasure in rousing what he called the "aristocratic prejudices" of his better half, who, it was easy to perceive, was as refined and particular as he was lax. She was also a reserved and reticent woman; so much so that not even her children knew anything of her parentage or early history; and in this particular her husband was as silent as she. Being naturally a jocular, outspoken man, this surprised his children as well as his friends and neighbours. Indeed, many years back, the latter had taken umbrage at his secrecy; but time and change of

abode gradually laid the spirit of gossip.

Little was known concerning his marriage. It was said that he had been the means of rescuing a gentleman and lady from a perilous carriage accident amongst the mountains, and shortly afterwards he had taken Llynhafod, and brought home a bride. As he was known as handsome Jack Mervyn, this was to have been expected ; but it was a terrible blow to his admirers that they did not learn even so much as the lady's name. That she had fallen in love with him for his looks was evident, for he had little else to boast of, and she was a lady of education and breeding. True, he belonged to what he chose to call an "elderly family;" but beyond a genealogical tree, at the summit of which was perched a Welsh prince, he had not received much from his ancestors. He had been a wild, rollicking, good-natured young man, much spoilt by women on account of his looks, and it was surmised that his marriage would steady

him. It did so, in some measure. He had a little money, wherewith he stocked Llynhafod, and took to farming. People wondered how he managed to pay his rent, and make two ends meet; but he had done so hitherto, and, in spite of his own levelling propensities, was reckoned, if not *quite* that rural demigod, a country gentleman, at least a gentleman-farmer. He, however, liked to annoy his wife by calling himself plain Farmer Mervyn, which, however, no one else called him. She, nevertheless, took her own line, and kept to it with marvellous resolution. She educated her children herself, and, in her sphere, did all in her power to save money. But she was incapable of managing the domestic economy of a farm, and this must have proved anything but "economy" but for an attached dairymaid, and, subsequently, her youngest child, Edwyna, whose tastes were domestic.

Mr. Mervyn would sometimes make dis-

paraging comparisons between his family and the less highly educated but more useful children of his neighbours; and would tell them, more frequently than they liked, that "they were neither one thing nor the other." Still he was of too easy and genial a nature to grumble much, and he let his "lady wife" have her own way, as he expressed it, "for peace and quietness."

Seated at her tea-table, Mrs. Mervyn looked the lady she was, though her dress was severely plain. But she had much difficulty in making a lady of Edwynna, who had such exuberant spirits, and was such a born romp, that neither reasoning nor coercion could restrain her. Whenever she could escape from her mother, she was after the cows, pigs, and poultry; and it was her delight to look for eggs, make hay, turn the churn, and otherwise prove that she was "a farmer's daughter." Her round, rosy face, curly brown hair, and exuberant laughter and jokes were alto-

gether Welsh, and she often made very disparaging remarks upon her mother's country-people, which greatly amused her father; but she was always careful to enunciate them in Welsh, a language which her mother had very partially acquired. Indeed, Mrs. Mervyn cordially hated it, and thus lost much genuine sympathy and kindness; for the Welsh, like the rest of the world, like those who like them. Not that Mrs. Mervyn disliked her husband's countrymen—she rather looked down upon them from a height on which she had placed herself through circumstances, and where her peculiar nature and position induced her to remain. It would have been an isolated position indeed, but for her children, particularly her only son.

“Who's *Virginie*?” asked Mr. Mervyn, with a sarcastic inflection of voice, when they were all seated.

“Mrs. Wynne's French nurse, father,”

replied Rose. "You must have seen her with the children."

"And Rose is nursery governess, so she is much higher, you know, father," cried Edwyna. "I'm sure I'd rather be a milkmaid."

"Edwyna, will you keep your opinions to yourself?" said Mrs. Mervyn. "Your father considered that Rose should do something to earn her living. I hope you are satisfied, Mr. Mervyn, now that she is remuneratively occupied."

"I agree with Edwyna. I would rather be a milkmaid," was the reply. "But as Mrs. Wynne applied, and you yielded, I——"

The remainder of the sentence was interrupted by the sudden entrance of a young man, who was warmly greeted by the little party. This was Edgar Edwardes, nephew of the vicar, and friend and fellow-student of Llewellyn Mervyn, "son of Llynhafod," as he was called.

The two young men were at Lampeter College, preparing for Holy Orders.

Edgar was devoted to Rose, who, albeit his junior by a year or more, looked upon him as a boy. He was a dreamy, dark-eyed, somewhat silent youth, whose abstracted moods were a source of amusement to Edwyna. He was soon seated at the tea-table, between the two girls, and had to answer questions on all sides concerning Llewellen.

"Is he quite well? Does he study too hard?" asked the anxious mother.

"No fear of that. Too like his father," put in Mr. Mervyn. "He won't lose his appetite and spoil his digestion by feeding on musty parchments—eh, Edgar?"

"Indeed I can't say. He is very well—very anxious to do right," replied Edgar, who was furtively looking at Rose.

"My boy could not do wrong," exclaimed Mrs. Mervyn.

"*My paragon!* eh, Edwyna?" said her

husband. "But what has Rebecca been doing in your parts, Edgar?"

"She is quiet just now, which uncle thinks bodes evil. He says the people are gone mad with success, and are no longer contented with pulling down the gates, but are beginning to threaten everything else that they consider a grievance. The Manorsant salmon-weir has been one, and they say Mr. Wynne has had commands to get rid of it."

"No wonder the old chap is frightened," laughed Mervyn. "I thought your uncle's preaching and praying had done more for us, and that Llansant was a pattern parish. Why, we are all innocent as lambs!"

"But the rioters are not natives of these parts, father," said Rose. "Mr. Philipps Wynne thinks half of them are Englishmen who have joined on speculation, and the rest mere idlers from other counties."

"Indeed! They know the country wonderfully well, considering! They man-

age to mislead, not only the soldiers, but the natives."

"That shows how much cleverer they are than the English," cried Edwyna, who was never to be put down, and who upheld her country at all risks.

"Whether Welsh or English, the riots are assuming undue proportions, and I have had my orders and made my preparations," said Mr. Mervyn. "Rebecca and her daughters are expected at Llansant pike to-night, and that blustering braggadocio, Philipps Wynne, who thinks he can rule the world because he's a magistrate, has ordered us specials out. I'll answer for it Rebecca knows all about us, and is laughing in her sleeve at having put us on a false scent. If she isn't Satan, as they say she is, she's a near relation."

"A grandmother's first cousin, perhaps," suggested Edwyna; at which her father laughed and her mother looked grave.

"I shouldn't wonder," returned the

former. "But mark me. If I beat anybody's brains out, or anybody performs the same civility on me, 'tis no fault of mine. Murder without malice prepense."

"Oh! father, don't say such horrible things!" said Rose, shutting her eyes; and even Mrs Mervyn looked alarmed.

But Mr. Mervyn knew more about the riots than they did, and, being a jocular man, liked to amuse himself by feeding the superstitious fancies of his neighbours, who, as we have already said, chose to believe that Rebecca was assisted by demoniacal agents.

CHAPTER III.

A FALSE ALARM.

THERE was not much sleep at Llynhafod that night. Mr. Mervyn had been enrolled, against his will, amongst the special constables sworn in by the magistrates to defend the country, or, more properly, her turnpikes, against Rebecca, and was obliged to attend Mr. Philipps Wynne at the threatened gate of Llansant. These valiant supporters of law against disaffection were to be stationed round about the sturdy corporal and his abode ; and when Mr. Mervyn left the farm in the dark, armed with his club of office, he glanced back at his terrified

wife and daughters with an amused smile. His children had embraced him, and even Mrs. Mervyn looked anxious.

“I wish I might have a club and fight for Rebecca,” cried Edwyna, when her mother ordered her to bed. “I shall lie awake and watch for the bonfire on Penllyn.”

“You will do no such thing. You will pray for your father, and go to sleep,” replied Mrs. Mervyn.

She and Rose watched, nevertheless. They stood in their little garden of choice flowers, and gazed through the cloudy night from right to left, above and below them. The one benefit that Mrs. Mervyn had condescended to receive from the inmates of Manorsant, was the aid of the gardener in the cultivation and preservation of these flowers that bloomed, unseen at the moment, around her and her daughter! Her girls had their tangled garden of native gems below—she had her par-

terre in the front of her sitting-room. Hence they looked upon the lake, beyond which rose the church and vicarage of Lllasant, seated on an opposite hill, whence Mr. Edwardes commanded his parish beneath. On their right, at the extremity of the lake, rose the conical hill of Penllyn, or the head of the lake; on their left, Castell Lynn, the ruin already mentioned.

It was, however, towards Penllyn that the eyes of the watchers in the garden were most anxiously and frequently directed. This had been a stronghold of the ancient Britons in times of war, and here were not only the remains of their encampment, but also of Roman works. It was surrounded by a fosse and vallum, while at its base lay the Sarn Helen, or causeway that once ran through this part of South Wales, and up to the borders of the northern division of the country. The neighbourhood of the lake was as interest-

ing to the antiquary as to the lover of nature, but to no one perhaps so interesting as to its White Rose, who stood by her mother, calm, pale, but resolute, gazing upwards at the frowning mountain.

“There it is!” she exclaimed, suddenly, laying one hand on Mrs. Mervyn’s arm, and pointing with the other to Penllyn.

A flame suddenly started out of the mountain like some volcanic eruption. It gradually increased in dimensions till it became a huge bonfire; and they knew that Rebecca had kindled her signal. Before long they saw another and another flame upon more distant hills, and wondered whether the work of destruction were going on down below at Llansant turnpike, and what would be the fate of the corporal and constables.

“If only they had not used the time-honoured stones of the old city to light their fire on!” said Rose. “I went up to look at it the other day, and there is a

huge round heap collected from the ancient remains, on which they pile the stuff for the fire."

"You must not go there again. You are foolhardy, Rose," said her mother. "Suppose you were to fall in with the rioters!"

"They would not hurt me, mother, for I prayed against bad spirits, and you know they are frightened away by prayer," said Rose, who, though not without common sense, was imbued with her country's romance, and not quite free from belief in its fables.

"My dear Rose, you cannot be so superstitious," returned her mother.

"I scarcely know, mother. It is so difficult to disconnect the legendary from the real in this country. And I so dearly love the old legends! But, look! some one is coming; I hope he is not a bearer of ill news."

There was the shadow of a man at the

garden gate, and in a few minutes they were joined by Edgar Edwardes, who had been lingering at a distance for some time.

“I thought you would be watching,” he said, “and I just ran up to tell you that all is quiet at the turnpike. My uncle is there, and means to give Rebecca a salute in the way of a sermon ; but the specials are not visible. They have been well drilled by Mr. Philipps Wynne, I should think. He makes the most of having been a lieutenant in the Army, and being colonel of the militia. Are you frightened, Rose?”

“Not in the least. Do you see the bon-fire reflected on the lake? It is almost like sunset—a real rosy flood of colour.”

“You will take cold. May I fetch you some wraps, Mrs. Mervyn? I ought to apologize for coming so late,” said Edgar, who was in some dread of that lady, and who fancied she was displeased at his second visit.

“No, thank you: We will go in, and perhaps you had better see after your uncle,” she replied.

He took the hint; and, with a glance at Rose, and a respectful “Good night, ma’am,” to her mother, disappeared in the direction of the village, while Mrs. Mervyn and Rose withdrew into the house, and finally went to bed.

While this passed at Llynhafod, Mr. Mervyn and his coadjutors were concealed near Llansant turnpike. Mr. Philipps Wynne had marshalled them, and had placed one half of them behind the hedge on one side of the road, the rest on the opposite side, below the rocky bank of the river, so that they were well concealed. He had made himself somewhat obnoxious by the resolution he had displayed on many occasions, when, perhaps, mercy had not tempered his justice; and he was now fearlessly resolved to attack Rebecca as soon as she appeared. It was quite certain

that she would appear, and he was curious to see her and her daughters in their white garb, and to lay his cudgel on their backs.

Not so Mr. Mervyn. His sympathies were with Rebecca, and so, indeed, were those of others of her imagined enemies, because they believed the turnpikes a grievance, and even felt it as such personally.

“No wonder old Letty has the rheumatics,” he whispered to a friend, in their ambush below the river bank. “I shall be laid up with rheumatic fever. Indeed, I feel it already in my right arm, and shall never be able to hit Rebecca.”

“I wonder who the old squire has to protect him?” whispered the man to whom he spoke.

“I heard Philipps Wynne send the parson to him,” replied Mr. Mervyn. “Edwardes will take care of him, body and soul, if anyone will. Confound the spray! We shall be wet through before long.”

“You would make a bad rifleman, Mervyn,” laughed a special. “How would you like to be for hours on all-fours with a gun in your hand?”

“Not at all, thank you. Hush! I hear a horse. Rebecca rides a white one. Oh, my poor rheumatic arm! It won't hold the club, and I've a mind to throw it into the river and run away.”

“Attention! Be ready!” was whispered from man to man; and the specials shouldered their clubs.

“I wonder where Johnnes Glynglås is?” said somebody.

“Far away, you may be sure,” replied Mervyn. “This isn't the sort of work he likes. He has made himself scarce ever since we have wielded club. He's as riotous as the rioters, and wouldn't be likely to go against them. Here she comes! Now for it!”

There was a great clatter of horses' hoofs on the hard road. The night was

dark, so that, had the watchers been able to peep, they would have seen little. An imperative and repeated call of "Gate! Gate!" succeeded, and echoed like a signal on the quiet air. To the alarmed specials there seemed to be a dozen different voices at least. Still, at a word of command, they crept silently from their ambushment on either side of the road, and made a sort of invisible ring-fence about the turnpike. Such had been the orders of their chief, and it must be confessed that, in most instances, they were obeyed with fear and trembling. All looked for the white-shirted Rebecca on her white horse. There was a white horse, certainly, but that was all that was visible in the gloom—the white garb was absent, and there was, apparently, no crowd.

"Gate! If you don't open, Madoc, corporal, we'll pull your gate about your ears," was heard from its rider. "What right have you to keep people waiting?"

"That's Alfred Johnnes's voice as sure as I'm alive!" whispered Mervyn.

"Can't you be waiting till I am putting on my coat!" growled the corporal, who was, at the moment, peering through the small, deep window that looked out upon the gate. "Name o' goodness! do you think gate-keepers were made to wait upon a pack of braying asses like you?"

"Look after the asses and the horses will take care of themselves," laughed the outsiders. "Make haste or we'll have your house about your ears."

"I'm in no such hurry. Wait you till I've lighted my lantern," said the corporal, withdrawing from his observatory.

"Rebecca never waits. Down with the pikes. But you'll be waiting to some purpose if you don't take care," was the reply.

Out stumped the corporal's wooden leg, and in closed the constables with a shout; for Philipps Wynne was resolved to do the

thing with the strong arm of the law, and show that there was some one in the county who would withstand the rebels. All the clubs were ready, though nothing but the white horse was visible through the darkness.

“Pay double toll!” cried the bold corporal, holding up his lantern. “Past twelve o’clock, and nobody shall pass till the toll is paid.”

The lantern served to reveal his white nightcap and tassel, and to suggest to the imagination the great-coat pulled over the shirt, and the wooden leg preceding the stockingless limb of flesh and bone.

“Surrender!” shouted the chief constable, as he and his specials closed in.

“Haw, haw, haw! Who do you take us for?” returned a chorus of voices. “I’ll have the law on every man jack of you for assaulting honest wayfarers, and on you, Madoc, corporal, for not doing your duty.”

“Mr. Alfred! Name o’ goodness what

are you about? 'Tis I'll have the law if you've frightened the breath out of my Egain!" cried the corporal.

"A very poor joke indeed," said the young squire, coming forward, amid the suppressed laughter of his followers. "It is I who will summon you for threatening a quiet gate-keeper in the performance of his duty. Mr. Johnnes, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"But he didn't perform his duty," said Alfred Johnnes—for he it was, accompanied by two other rollicking youths. "Come you, corporal. You know you wouldn't let us through because you were afraid of Rebecca. Open the gate, for there's Lewis, Nant Mill frightened to death of his wife, and you know how I dread my mother's tongue. There's your toll. I'm sure I am sorry for giving you so much trouble, gentlemen, but, all the same, Rebecca is on the road. Open the gate, Madoc, corporal."

The latter words were said in a whisper,

and Madoc knew that he had no right to disobey them. He opened it partially, and three horsemen passed through, all of whom he knew, and rode off at full gallop down the hill, laughing loudly.

“That wild fellow will break his neck!” said Mervyn.

“If a halter don’t break it for him. But I’ll have him up for this!” blustered Philipps Wynne, “I heard him use threatening language.”

“’Twas only in fun. He’s full of his jokes,” returned the corporal. “I don’t think there’s much chance of Rebecca to-night, gentlemen. Look you at Penllyn. The fire’s going out already, which shows that there is no one there to tend it; and I’m of opinion that they keep the fire up nearest the gate they mean to destroy. I’m not afraid of ’em; for they know they’ll have a hard try with me. Good night, gentlemen. You’ll excuse me, for I’m in dishabille, as Mamselle Virginny says.”

Madoc returned to his house. He found Letty in much perturbation, but Egain was sleeping peaceably. He went inside her screen, just to look at her before he again got into bed, and murmured, "He giveth His beloved sleep."

Mr. Wynne held a consultation with his followers, who had already had enough of duty for that night. They came to the conclusion that it was of no use to remain longer at their post, since they had, apparently, been fooled by a party of merry men, who probably knew well enough that they were there. But he persisted in his intention of summoning Johnnes for threatening words. On seeking ear-witnesses of his plaint, however, he found that not one of his specials had heard the threat, or professed not to have heard it.

"I couldn't swear to it—nor I—nor I," they all declared; and the choleric young squire was on the eve of calling them cowards or liars, when Mervyn suggested

that his father might not approve of his having the law against Alfred Johnnes. "He is a wild fellow, but there is no harm in him," he said.

"He is the pest of the country, and you had best keep him out of your daughter's way," replied Mr. Philipps Wynne, hotly. "He shall pay for this bit of pleasure, whether you help me or not."

So saying, he turned towards the Manor, accompanied by such of the men as were going his way, while Mervyn and the rest went theirs, cracking their jokes and laughing at their own discomfiture as they stumbled along just as the dawn was about to greet them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SQUIRE AND ROSE.

IN spite of late hours, Rose was on her way to Manorsant the following morning between eight and nine. Having a commission for her mother, she took the lane that led to the village instead of her favourite way across the lake. This lane was clothed in a bridal dress of hawthorn, and seemed to be either created for her, or she for it. As she walked through it, she began imitating the songs of the thrush and blackbird, and felt, like them, the bliss of living on such a heavenly day. The country-folk were wont to say that she walked like a spirit, because she rather

glided along than trod, though she walked swiftly. At any rate, her movement was singularly graceful, and people watched her wherever she went.

When she reached the main road she glanced down it to discover if Alfred Johnnes were in sight; because he frequently tried to waylay her at this point. But she did not see him. She hastened up the road to the village, and entered its one small shop. This was situated in the midst of about half a score of cottages, which, with a wayside inn, constituted what was the actual village of Llansant, or the Church of the Saint, that saint being David, the patron saint of Wales. The cottages were on one side of a picturesque bridge of three arches, through which ran the river Teify, a river that brought many fishermen to the little inn, on account of its excellent fishing.

The scene from the bridge was very beautiful. On one bank of the foaming

torrent of a river rose gigantic rocks, covered, in parts, with every species of parasitical plant and shrub; on the other towered the hill upon which stood the old church with its straight black tower, the parsonage, and one or two cottages. In the distance were the mountains. It was no wonder that Rose was patriotic and romantic, with the shy, wild patriotism and romance of youth; for she had been cradled and trained amid scenes of beauty, poetry, and legendary lore.

She was greeted by several of her humble friends when she went into the shop, who were gossiping with Pal the Shop, as its mistress was called. The subject of conversation was the encounter of the previous night, and there was much laughter at the specials, most of whom were neighbouring farmers.

“There’s bold and clever Johnnes Glyn-glås is, Miss Mervyn,” said Pal, thinking to please Rose. “Everybody’s talking of

how he tricked the constables. But they are saying that Wynne Manorsant will have him up for it."

"I think he deserves it, if only for frightening Egain," replied Rose, quietly, as she nodded, took up her small parcel, and sped away.

Loitering on the bridge were a couple of anglers who were staying at the little inn. They looked earnestly at her as she crossed the bridge, but she did not hear the expressions of admiration that followed her, although she glanced at the speakers as she passed them by. She had seen one of them before at Manorsant, when walking with the children, and had remarked that he stood to let them pass, and then looked after them. She was happily unconscious of the spiritual beauty of her face; for amongst the people by whom she was surrounded she was scarcely considered beautiful, because she lacked the colour which they reckoned necessary for good

looks. Her exceeding whiteness and fairness caused the peasants to look upon her with fear, as she grew up, because they said she was almost a spirit already, and would certainly not live long, for there could scarcely be a drop of blood in her veins. If all that had been suggested concerning her, from infancy, had come to pass, she must have been in her grave long ago. Still she grew up like the lilies, and rejoiced in her mountain home, its lake, hills, and all that belonged to it, with an exceeding joy.

It was not long before she reached the turnpike, which she never passed without going to see Egain. The corporal and Letty overwhelmed her with different accounts of what had happened the previous night, the former saying, with a knowing look, that Rebecca was too cunning to go where she was expected, and was, in all probability, at her tricks somewhere else.

Rose laid the parcel she had brought

from the shop on Egain's bed, unperceived by the invalid. It was a fancy of hers to try to make Egain believe that the good fairy of the lake watched over her, but Egain was sceptical concerning what she could neither see with her eyes nor read in the Bible, and laughed at what she called "Miss Mervyn's pretty fables," saying that "she was her 'Lady of the Lake,'" and she wanted no other.

"Were you very much frightened last night?" asked Rose. "Mother and I thought much of you."

"No, miss, for I never awoke. Our Father in Heaven is very merciful to me," replied Egain.

"He loves you because you believe in Him, I think," returned Rose, and hastened on her way.

Another quarter of a mile by the rapid river brought her to the lodge of Manor-sant. The keeper and her children were out to bid her good day, and to watch

her up the drive, for events and morning visitors were rare in that lonely spot. Ten minutes' rapid walk through the park, and she reached a side gate, which led through towering laurel hedges to the house. These hedges were the pride of Manor-sant, and stood like green walls as protection against the north-east wind. They rose to a height of ten or twelve feet, and were so well trimmed and intertwined that they defied the elements.

At the end of one of these green passages was a side door, which Rose opened. This was the children's entrance; and near it was a private staircase, also dedicated to them, which led to their apartments, and which Rose mounted.

Old Mr. Wynne was a nervous invalid, and could not bear the noise of children, therefore their domain was made separate from his as much as possible. It was principally on his account, also, that Mrs. Philipps Wynne had been desirous of ob-

taining a daily governess for them, and had, with some difficulty, prevailed on Mrs. Mervyn to spare her daughter. Indeed, Mrs. Mervyn would not have consented to this arrangement, but for the fact that her husband declared his children must all work, and Rose was not as skilful at household duties as she ought to have been. She was sadly conscious of this, and had, therefore, resolved to make amends for her deficiencies by becoming a first-rate teacher. But the education of three spoilt, refractory children was even more difficult than the management of her father's dairy.

She found these, her pupils, awaiting her, in company with their *bonne*, Virginie. They were Teddy, aged seven, Maggie, six, and Pussy, five. Virginie had been governess as well as nurse until Rose's arrival, and did not like to be dethroned. She was a bright, lively, handsome French-woman, of five-and-twenty; and gave her-

self many airs, which Rose did not condescend to notice. Moreover, she had strict orders from her mother to profit by Virginie's accent, and to converse with her in French as often as she could. Rose's colloquial French was sadly imperfect; and she found obedience difficult, as the children—even little Pussy—corrected her mistakes, and shouted out their opinions that "Miss Mervyn didn't know as much as they. Wasn't she a fine new governess!"

Happily, Virginie had her nursery, Rose her school-room, so they were not likely to come often in contact, save at meal-time, when Virginie waited at table, and made her remarks, both private and public.

The *Bon jour, mademoiselle*, and the *Bon jour, Virginie*, being said, the nurse disappeared, and Rose, trembling slightly, told her pupils to kneel down. Her good friend and pastor had advised her always to begin her day with prayer and a Scrip-

ture lesson, and she was endeavouring to persevere in following his advice. The novelty of the proceeding had secured obedience the first day or two, but Master Teddy was growing tired of it.

“I’ve said my prayers, and I won’t say them no more,” he said, lustily, assuming a defiant attitude.

“And I won’t! and I won’t!” shouted his sisters.

Rose was confused for a moment, but she had a very determined will of her own, and said to herself, “Now, or never”—having learnt many a good lesson of resolution from her mother, who always conquered by quiet persistence.

“Very well,” she said, decidedly. “I cannot bend naughty children’s knees, but you will stand where you are and not move, while I pray for you; and remember that the great and good God sees and hears us.”

She knelt down, and offered up a simple

prayer in her own words. The children, unaccustomed to decision or resistance, were surprised at this unexpected movement. They stood, open-eyed, with their fingers in their mouths, as children will. Then Maggie suddenly exclaimed,

“I won't be naughty no more. Come along, Pussy,” and the little girls fell upon their knees.

“I will be naughty if I choose,” said Teddy, sturdily, and, man-like, refused to bend the knee.

Still he looked on, irresolute as to whether he should make a great noise or not; for, in spite of his independence, he had a certain fear of the invisible Being of whom Rose had spoken. His childish cogitations were interrupted by the entrance of Virginia, just as Rose was concluding, and the little girls saying “Amen.” Teddy made a face at Virginia, who shrugged her shoulders, but waited until the trio rose from their knees. Then she said,

“Madame desires me to tell mademoiselle that Mr. Wynne, *le vieux monsieur*, wishes to see her, and awaits her in his sitting-room.”

“Hullo! you have been doing something you oughtn't to!” shouted Teddy, relieved from his indecision. “You have been making a noise, Miss Mervyn, and grandpapa's too nervous to eat his breakfast. You'll catch it. Oh! I'm glad 't isn't me.”

“Mr. Wynne wants to see me!” exclaimed Rose, who had scarcely ever had any conversation with the old squire, and who feared she must, as Teddy suggested, have given offence.

She was assured that “she was wanted,” and followed Virginie in some trepidation, after having told her pupils to look at their lessons, which they did not do. Virginie arrested her on the landing with a question, spoken so rapidly in French that she could not understand it.

“This *Monsieur Jeannes*,” repeated Vir-

ginie, in English. "What did he last night to frighten so *le vieux monsieur*? He went not to bed, but sat up with your priest, M. Edwardes, until M. Philippe returned. He was then in much fear of Rebecca"—here Virginie crossed herself for protection against that evil one—"and it is now this Monsieur Jeannes of whom they speak. The domestics laugh, and say he is wilder than your goats. *You* know him, *mademoiselle*. Tell me what he has done?"

Virginie fixed her eyes on Rose, and there was something malicious in their glance. Rose did not like her, and she strove to discourage her attempts at confidential intercourse, which had begun on the first day of her engagement at the Manor. She had once or twice before tried to engage her in conversation about Alfred Johnnes, with whom, Rose had often heard, she was more intimate than seemed discreet, when their relative positions were

considered. But, then, had not Johnnes been also intimate with Egain?—and was he not said to be a general admirer of good-looking women?

“What happened to Monsieur Jeannes last night?” repeated Virginie, as Rose strove to pass her by.

“He merely rode through the turnpike late, and encountered the constables,” she replied, curtly.

But this did not satisfy Virginie.

“You are his friend, and know his secrets, mademoiselle,” she persisted, detaining Rose at the head of the stairs, by standing with her back to them, and holding the banisters. “He walks with you, makes you visits, makes you his court. What has he done?”

“I am not in his secrets; I do not know,” replied Rose, calmly, but haughtily, for she had sometimes her mother’s manner. “Had we not better go to Mr.

Wynne? Will you kindly show me the way?"

"*Hein!* you must tell *le vieux monsieur*," said Virginie, spitefully, as a bell was heard to ring in a distant part of the house. "*Il a la patience du diable, ce vieillard.* This way, Mees Mervyn."

She turned, and began to descend. Rose followed. They were met by a footman, who said,

"Virginie, master is wanting Miss Mervyn."

"Miss was on her knees in prayer, and I must wait," replied Virginie, sarcastically.

"This way, miss, if you please," said the man to Rose; and she followed him to Mr. Wynne's private sitting-room.

"She knows all that concerns Monsieur Jeannes, but she shall not have him," muttered Virginie, in French, as she stood to watch Rose until she disappeared from her view; and it was fortunate that Rose did

not see the expression of jealous anger that came into her face, as she added, "*Ma foi!* Virginie La Fontaine shall not be circumvented by a white cat like that."

CHAPTER V.

TWO SUMMONSES.

MR. WYNNE was at breakfast when Rose was ushered into his room. He pushed back his large arm-chair, and got up to receive her. Having shaken hands with her, he drew a chair similar to his own close to a huge fire, and begged her to be seated. She felt even more shy than usual at being placed opposite him, with the breakfast-table on one side, the fire on the other, and nothing between but the hearthrug, and a Scotch terrier asleep upon it. He was a tall, thin, white-haired, pale-faced gentleman—really a gentleman—both in the conventional and literal sense. But this did not hinder his being

dyspeptic; perhaps it aided and abetted that unhappy condition of mind and body. He had a hasty, nervous manner, caused, in part, by his dislike to give offence, and this showed itself when he began to speak to Rose.

“Excuse me, Miss Mervyn. I hope you will excuse me for taking the liberty of sending for you without previously asking your permission; but I am quite upset and annoyed by these unseemly proceedings, not only of the Rebeccaites, but of our own people—I assure you it makes me ill. I could not rest until my daughter-in-law had finished breakfast; she is always late, you know, so I take mine alone. I prefer it. By the way, I hope the children don’t annoy you. They are fine children in the main, but noisy, very noisy indeed.”

He paused.

“Oh, no, sir,” said Rose, seeing that she was expected to reply. “I hope we shall get on together.”

“Very glad to hear it. I shall owe you a debt of gratitude if you succeed in keeping them quiet. I wished to ask you before my son comes to me, what your good father thinks of last night’s proceedings. My son returned very angry indeed—very angry—and declares he will proceed against young Johnnes for threatening Madoc the corporal. I was too anxious to go to bed; and our worthy vicar—a most excellent man—kindly remained with me. May I ask, without intruding on your family affairs, what your father thinks? He is a sensible man, and not suspicious—not suspicious, which is a great point.”

“He laughs at the whole affair, sir,” replied Rose.

“Ah! I thought so. He *is* a sensible man,” said Mr. Wynne, gently chafing his thin, white hands before the fire. “He likes peace, and so do I, Miss Mervyn—so do I. Does he think young Johnnes

should be summoned? Do you think so? You know him, and appear to be a discreet young lady—very discreet indeed, I may say.”

Rose felt the blood rush to her face, though her white cheeks betrayed no sign of colour. She could not understand why everyone spoke to her of Alfred Johnnes, and she wished they would not. However, she replied, timidly,

“I think he is fond of fun, and wanted to frighten old Madoc. He did not know that the special constables were there, and it was a general surprise.”

“Just so, Miss Mervyn. Quite my opinion. I shall tell my son what you say. I am sure we are fortunate in securing so discreet and accomplished a young lady for those very obstreperous children. I hope the little girls will acquire your manners, I am sure. But then your mother has singularly good manners, very good indeed. I always hold her up as a

pattern of breeding, and wish more of her sex were like her."

"Thank you, sir," said Rose, a sweet smile moving her lips, and giving lustre to her eyes, for she was not accustomed to hear her mother thus appreciated.

Mr. Wynne looked at her with interest, but returned to his original subject at once.

"Would you mind asking your father, as a personal favour to me, to persuade my son to use mild measures in these disturbed times. I know the people better than he does. They may be led, but not driven; you understand me, Miss Mervyn? I am deprived of my usual sleep, and am totally without appetite, on account of threatening letters, the grave in the park, and all these disturbances; and, upon my word, I scarcely think one's life is safe, though our excellent vicar assures me that I need not entertain this fear. Are you afraid, Miss Mervyn? Is your mother at all nervous?"

“I fear more for Egain than for anyone else, sir. I do not know what would become of her if they pulled down Llansant turnpike. She is quite helpless.”

“Very considerate indeed. Then you will feel equally for me, who am really not—well, not quite strong—and prevail on your father to influence my son. Hark! I am afraid this is my son, and before his usual time. I really never can have any privacy or repose.”

The door opened, and Mrs. Philipps Wynne appeared, in a great fuss.

“Ah, my dear, it is you! Good morning! How well you look!” continued Mr. Wynne. “I took the liberty of sending for this young lady, just to inquire about last night; the opinion of her father is everything to me, for he knows the state of the country, and is sensible, and, as I said to you, Miss Mervyn, not suspicious. I trust the children have been behaving well during her absence, Harriette?”

"They were making such a riot that I have just been to see what was the matter, and Virginie told me Miss Mervyn was here," replied Mrs. Wynne, nodding to Rose, who got up when she came in.

She was a lady below the middle height, dark, high-complexioned, and not quite so fine a lady as her father-in-law a gentleman. Indeed, she sometimes affected his nerves by speaking with a loud decision that he did not understand. Still she was good-natured, and, provided she was able to fill her house with company, did not interfere with him. Considering that the house, servants, and Manor were his, this was, certainly, the least she could do.

"Have you anything more to say, sir?" asked Rose, perceiving that Mrs. Wynne expected her to depart, and feeling, herself, anxious to get away.

"If he has, Miss Mervyn, I think it had better be deferred," said Mrs. Wynne, decidedly. "Why, your breakfast is quite

cold, and Jones has left the cozy off your tea-pot! My dear sir, you should not interrupt your breakfast. You know that you say nothing is so bad as interrupted meals."

"I should not indeed, my dear, with my digestion," sighed Mr. Wynne. "But it is a choice between two evils—two evils. I will not detain you longer, Miss Mervyn. I am obliged to you—greatly obliged."

Just as he rose to shake hands, his son came in. He was slightly confused as he began to account again for Rose's appearance, but Mr. Philipps Wynne cut him short by addressing his wife, and telling her that breakfast had been waiting half an hour, and that they were getting later and later every day. When he perceived Rose, however, he also began to talk of Alfred Johnnes, to her great annoyance. He was a genuine Welshman, choleric and independent, and was as resolute as his father was timid.

“Good morning, Miss Mervyn. What has become of your father? I have just been looking for him, and can’t find him. What does he think of Alfred Johnnes?” he said, all in a breath.

“My father was at home when I left,” replied Rose. “And I believe he thinks the whole affair was a jest.”

“After all, Rebecca was ten miles away last night, and actually destroyed New Inn gate, while everybody, abroad and at home, expected her here,” continued Philipps. “What verdict do you think the cowardly jury have pronounced in the case of the old woman who was surely murdered at Tygwyn? They have brought it in ‘suffusion of blood on the brain.’ And I’ll answer for it, the poor soul had no brain.”

“Oh, Philipps, you are unjust to the poor woman, you are indeed,” broke in Mr. Wynne. “I have seen her, and a very civil-spoken woman she was. I daresay

the jury was right—and it was suffusion of blood.”

“They were a confounded set of cowards, and we haven’t a man with a conscience, gentle or simple, in the county. I, at least, won’t yield a jot to them, and will hunt down the rebels and summon Johnnes if I die for it,” exclaimed Philipps, so hotly that his father shrank back in his chair, and his wife looked alarmed.

“Pray be calm, and think of my nervous state, Philipps, and let that respectable young man alone,” pleaded the former.

“Do come down to breakfast, and leave Mr. Wynne to eat his in peace,” urged the latter.

Rose, seeing she was in the way, made her escape to the school-room.

But, in spite of his father’s remonstrances, Philipps Wynne summoned Alfred Johnnes soon afterwards, for using threatening language to Madoc the corporal. He also summoned many of his

specials as witnesses, Mr. Mervyn amongst them, as well as the corporal. He got nothing but ill-repute for his pains. There was no one but Madoc who had seen Alfred Johnnes, and, while boldly swearing to this fact, he declared that he knew the young man well, and that it was all a hoax. Mr. Mervyn was the only other witness who acknowledged to having even recognized his voice, and the charge was considered as not sufficiently substantiated. In truth the magistrates, with the single exception of Philipps Wynne, were as much frightened as the farmers, and glad to let the young man off.

Alfred Johnnes himself appeared bold and unconcerned, and laughed at the whole affair, just as he had done at all the scrapes he had got into ever since he was born.

He managed to fall in with Rose as he rode homewards after his case had been dismissed. She had passed the turnpike and the short cut to the lake, so, had she

wished to escape from him, she could not have managed it. He dismounted, as usual, and composedly walked by her side through the village, and as far as the by-road with its hawthorn hedges that led to her home. He was reckoned the best-looking man in the parish, and was greatly admired by the fair sex. He was over thirty, and had, therefore, had some experience of female adulation, which, together with his mother's injudicious training, had tended to give him a good opinion of himself. But Philipps Wynne did not admire him as much as did the ladies. Indeed, they had had so many passes at arms on so many subjects that they cordially disliked one another. But for the old squire, Johnnes would have been summoned more than once before for fishing in preserved waters, and shooting preserved game ; and the worldly-wise advised him to be more cautious, and to keep a civiler tongue in his head, if he wished to

retain the land he rented from the Wynnes.

"It has been a great cry and little wool, Miss Mervyn," said he to Rose. "They were all on my side. I mustn't ride a white horse any more, or all the country will take me for Rebecca. How fast you walk! Why, Snowball can't keep up with you."

"I am in a hurry. It was a pity you should have played such a trick, and Egain so ill," returned Rose, meaningly. "You used to be kind to Egain and old Madoc, now you terrify her and annoy him."

Johnnes frowned, for he did not like the hit. He had spent much of his time a few years previously at the turnpike with the corporal, listening to his stories of the battles he had fought. Egain was then a bright, handsome girl, about his own age, and they had been on familiar terms, and had even been reported lovers.

"Egain wants rousing. Dr. Griffiths says she gives way," he said, after a pause.

“Dr. Griffiths told mother, on the contrary, that she wants quiet,” returned Rose. “We think that if the rioters really came to Llansant gate they would kill her. We would have her with us, but she will not leave her parents.”

“Why do you call them *rioters*, Miss Mervyn?”

“Because they make a riot, and do much mischief.”

“At any rate, they do good with their *rioting*, as you call it. More than half the gates will be put down, and the poor won't have to pay their last farthing for bringing home a hundred of coal in a donkey-cart, or a couple of sacks on pony-back.”

“And the rick-burning, and the anonymous letters, and the effigies, and the pretended ghosts, Mr. Alfred? Surely people who work by night to do mischief are cowards!”

“I call them brave men, Miss Mervyn, who put down abuses, whether by night or

by day. Thank your father, with my compliments, for swearing to my voice. I didn't know before it was 'mine, only mine,' as the song says."

"He could not help it, you know, because he heard old Madoc call you by name, and heard all you said distinctly. He was very sorry, and I scarcely think he would have done it but for mother."

"I wish there were no such things as mothers. They plague the life out of one. I wouldn't have yours for a thousand pounds; and mine's such a scrade that she can get no one to live with her."

As he said this they reached the turning, and Rose, with an indignant glance and hasty good evening, left the young man, who remounted, set spurs to his horse, and tore up the hill.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VICAR AND THE BISHOP.

WHEN Rose reached home she found Mr. Edwardes with her mother, who had for many years felt her greatest consolation and support in conversation with her pastor. He was a remarkable man, though not what is called "a model clergyman," by people who would have their parish priest made to order after some pattern of their own. He was plain and out-spoken both in public and private discourse, and was never known to flinch from what he considered his duty from any fear of persons. He was, moreover, an eloquent and powerful preacher.

It was rumoured that his reputation

had reached the ears of the bishop, and his flock trembled lest he should leave them for some more important cure. But he was not ambitious, and was quite content with Llansant, the income of which was barely one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, the greater portion of which he spent amongst the poor. He was not yet forty years of age, but was accounted a confirmed bachelor, and, what was still more remarkable, he had never been suspected of an attachment to any young lady.

“My heart is in my sacred calling,” he would say, when friends jested, as friends will; yea, even the clerical: for all need the relaxation of a joke.

In addition to his parochial duties, Mr. Edwardes had undertaken to prepare his nephew for college. This had led Mrs. Mervyn to sound her husband concerning his plans for their son; and, finding he had none beyond work at Llynhafod, she had, by a perseverance irritating to him, induced

him, with much difficulty, to ask Mr. Edwardes to receive and instruct him with Edgar. She had herself taught him up to this stage of the educational ladder. Being a woman of determination, she afterwards gained, by quiet resolution rather than influence, another advantage over husband and son, and managed that her idol, Llewellen, should go with Edgar Edwardes to Lampeter College.

But she knew full well that Llewellen pined for a military life; but, even could a commission have been procured for him, she would never have given her consent to his entering the army. She was aware that a commission was out of the question without either influence or money, and she had, of course, told him so. He had submitted cheerfully. But now that the soldiers had actually arrived in South Wales, and were quartered in the county town, she dreaded lest the fever might return, and her son be even tempted to

enlist. He must encounter them, for they were on the track of the Rebeccaites, and summoned to suppress them. She only prayed that Llansant gate might be spared, and the red-coats kept from the immediate neighbourhood. It was to the corporal's stories of battles and sieges that her boy's military ardour was in part due, and she owed him a grudge for his influence.

It was of these important matters she and Mr. Edwardes were talking when Rose joined them. He merely smiled at the fair girl when she entered, and pursued the subject; so that she heard her mother's reply to a remark he had made on her brother's character.

"Llewellen is the soul of honour," said Mrs. Mervyn. "I am sure he would not undertake so sacred a calling unless he could do so conscientiously. And Edgar says he is working well; and you admit that he is quite up to his examination. This is due to you, Mr. Edwardes, who

have spared neither time nor labour to prepare him."

"The work was pleasant to me," rejoined the vicar. "I only trust the result may be profitable to him and the Church. But, as you know, I believe in a special 'call.'"

At this juncture Mr. Mervyn came in, and his wife instantly changed the conversation.

"Mr. Edwardes brings an invitation," she said, hastily.

"I want some of you to come with me to the opening of Llangoch church on Friday next," said Mr. Edwardes to Mervyn. "The bishop is to preach in Welsh. He, an Englishman, has taught himself our language, to remove a blot on our Church."

"Why can't we have Welsh bishops?" grumbled Mervyn; "I do not like the English well enough to care to hear him, and don't believe in his mastery of the language."

“Oh, father!” ejaculated Rose, glancing at her mother. “I am to have a holiday on Friday; I should like to hear the bishop. Father—mother—I wish we could all go! Do come for once, dear mother!”

Mrs. Mervyn shook her head. She had never been five miles from Llansant since her marriage.

“I suppose there is to be preachifying all day,” said Mr. Mervyn. “When do you hold forth, Edwardes? and how many compliments do you mean to pay?”

“I am to preach in the evening,” returned the vicar, modestly. “There are to be two sermons. Jenkins of Penycraig is to preach the first, I the second.”

“He will be an hour and half, you an hour, the service half an hour, the singing nobody knows how long; we shouldn’t get home till midnight.”

“I am afraid that it will be late,” returned Mr. Edwardes. “But you will be spiritually benefited.”

“Ay, that is as may be. Do you really wish to go, Rose?”

“Yes, if mother has no objection,” replied Rose.

“Then we will think it over again, parson,” concluded Mervyn.

The result of his meditation was that on the following Friday Mr. Mervyn drove Rose and the vicar to the opening of Llangoch church in his dog-cart.

Rose spent a day after her own heart. She was deeply religious as well as romantic, and never tired of the long sermons her country's clergy loved to pour out; nor did she complain, despite her susceptibility, of the exceeding energy of their voices and movements. It was, however, new life to her to listen to the measured, chosen, sonorous, thoughtful discourse of the learned, great, and good Connop Thirlwall, bishop of St. David's. While the multitude was, perhaps, seeking for flaws in his pronunciation and accentua-

tion of a foreign and difficult language, she sat entranced, her white face upturned to his, her hands clasped, her lips slightly parted. Her father, who sat by her side, was also deeply interested, and whispered to her more than once that he could scarcely believe his lordship to be English. Indeed, such was the general verdict; for the bishop had mastered the language, so that his shortcomings were but slight, and they were readily condoned, since he was the only bishop who had preached in Welsh for many generations. As Rose contemplated his massive forehead, deep grey eyes, and firm, calm mouth, she thought of the learned research and vast powers of the man, and wished—oh, how she wished!—that she might know him. To be acquainted with the great and good was one of the many dreams of her life, and he was, perhaps, the greatest divine of his generation.

“If only I might be in the same room

with him!" she thought, in her enthusiastic admiration.

This wish was gratified; for when the morning service was over Mr. Edwardes joined her and her father, and offered to take care of her while Mr. Mervyn went to meet a friend with whom he had made an appointment.

"Well," said Mervyn, "I must say your bishop has done capitally. He must have had good instructors—better than that former bishop who couldn't master the language. 'Put your right reverend tongue into your episcopal teeth, my lord, and hiss like a goose,' said his teacher. But even some of the *uchs* and *l's* I heard to-day might be mended."

"I could desire nothing better," said Mr. Edwardes, "This is the way to the vicarage, Rose."

She followed him through the dense crowd that thronged the churchyard, remaining at a little distance as he stopped

to speak to one after another of his clerical brethren, who congratulated him on having found a fair friend at last. But he went direct to his object, which was to ask the clergyman's wife to give Rose some luncheon at the vicarage. She readily consented, with the proviso of "if there is room." Rose drew back instinctively with "Indeed, I would rather not intrude." But, as there was no time for parley, to the vicarage she went. Luncheon was prepared there for the bishop, his clergy, and such of their immediate friends as were present at the consecration of the church, and a seat was found for Rose. Thanks to the popularity of Mr. Edwardes, she was actually at the table laid for the principal guests, in the same room with the bishop; for the other rooms were also full of people. She had Mr. Edwardes by her side, and therefore, although she felt shy, she was sufficiently self-possessed—that is to say, she forgot self, luncheon, and her fellow guests in her desire to hear

what flowed from the lips of the eminent historian and divine.

She only caught a few words, for he did not speak much, and what he said was to those near him; but she was content. Something that passed, however, brought Mr. Edwardes prominently forward, and, for a few minutes, all eyes were fixed on him. During his brief answer, the bishop turned towards him, and met Rose's earnest gaze. He smiled—perhaps in return for the admiration it expressed—perhaps at her exceeding fairness. Be this as it may, many eyes were turned towards her, and among them those of old Mr. Wynne and a gentleman who sat beside him. The Squire nodded kindly to her, and she bowed in return, then, in much real timidity, turned her eyes upon her untouched plate.

“Who is she?” whispered Mr. Wynne's companion. “What a remarkable face she has! I don't wonder that the bishop looked at her.”

“Miss Mervyn. The daughter of a neighbour of mine,” replied Mr. Wynne, with kindly tact.

When the attention of the company was withdrawn from Mr. Edwardes, Rose looked up again, but it was to meet the gaze of Mr. Wynne’s friend, who had, like the bishop, deep, thoughtful, intelligent eyes, but who could not, like his lordship, be engaged in the sacred ministry, because he wore a moustache, the sign, in those days, of the soldier. His glance was instantly withdrawn, but Rose caught it again more than once, when she was either talking to Mr. Edwardes, examining her surroundings, or listening eagerly for words from the lips of the bishop.

“I wonder who he is; he seems a friend of Mr. Wynne’s,” she thought, as she found herself suddenly attracted by an expression of his face.

It was strangely penetrating, and seemed to be reading Rose as if it were looking

into a new and interesting, but slightly uneasy business, but it did not last long. He was expectedly drawn into the room, stalked into the room with a sort of dispatch, and he was an officer, and he gave a salute.

"Rebecca!" he said with a smile. "She is more than a bishop. I have known her."

He did so with a smile, and soon afterwards he broke up.

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CHAPTER VII.

REBECCA AND HER DAUGHTERS.

AS Mr. Mervyn suspected, it was night before the numerous services at the church were over. He was obliged to wait for Mr. Edwardes, consequently it was nearly midnight when they approached Llansant parish. It was a moonless night, though not absolutely dark, and Mervyn kept his mare at a good pace. But she suddenly started and shied, which was such an unusual proceeding on her part that he pulled her up, assured that something was wrong. They were within half a mile of Manorsant, near Mr. Wynne's salmon-weir; and, as the road ran by the river, the noise of the rushing waters

drowned other sound, if there were any.

“I see something amongst the trees!” exclaimed Rose, pointing in the direction of the weir.

They all gazed through the intermediate gloom at the spot indicated, and felt sure that they distinguished both movement and lights on and about the river.

“It is Rebecca destroying one of her bugbears,” said Mervyn, coaxing his mare onwards till they neared the obnoxious weir. “Philipps Wynne *will* preserve the fish, and what else can he expect from poor souls who have hitherto made a living by selling it?”

“Obedience to the laws,” replied the vicar.

“Obedience is very well when one has enough to eat,” grumbled Mr. Mervyn. “Philipps Wynne has his salmon, and grudges the peasant his sewen.”

“I cannot believe they are his tenants, or my parishioners,” said Mr. Edwardes,

who had a child-like faith in his flock. "Why, they are actually destroying the weir."

"Every man jack of 'em probably," laughed Mervyn, who, next to the pleasure he took in provoking his wife, delighted in teasing the vicar.

"Then it is my duty to point out their sin to them," exclaimed Mr. Edwardes, suddenly rising from his seat at the back of the dog-cart, and jumping from it to the road.

"Don't be an oaf, Edwardes," cried Mervyn, while Rose uttered a little cry, and stood upright by her father's side.

At the same moment the uproar of the waters increased, and Mervyn knew that part of the weir, at least, must be destroyed. Edwardes went straight to the spot where he saw the moving white figures, and Mervyn began to wish that he had kept his tongue between his teeth instead of letting it loose for a stupid joke. He

had, indeed, often to repent of that latent spirit of mischief that had been born with him.

Mr. Edwardes dashed in amongst a strange set of figures when he left the dog-cart. They were dressed in every species of female garment; some had on old gowns and caps, others loose shawls and bonnets. And, in default of these, a few wore skirts over their nether garments. The faces of all were blackened, so that not even the parson could recognize his parishioners, if there were actually any amongst the crowd. All were armed with implements of one kind or another, and furnished with torches, which cast a strange wild glare upon the waters, or flashed among the rocks and trees. The white horse was not there; but one figure in a very white shirt, peculiar bonnet, and black face, which Mr. Edwardes fancied was a mask, was, evidently, the fabulous Rebecca; for, by gesture rather than

word, she commanded and was obeyed.

The work of destruction was nearly completed when the vicar reached the spot. The weir had long been obnoxious to the peasantry and fishermen, because it prevented the salmon going up the river, and gave, as they considered, the squire an undue share of fish ; and now Rebecca had taken it in hand, and there was an end of it. Her myrmidons on either side the river must have made short and silent work of it, for down rushed the liberated waters like a huge torrent, roaring and foaming in the obscurity. Doubtless the salmon must have been much astonished at being thus roused from their slumbers.

“Are you not ashamed of yourselves ?” cried Mr. Edwardes, making his way into the thick of the throng. “Is this how you honour your Maker, by destroying your neighbour’s property ?”

“Down with the parson !” said a voice, while a smothered laugh succeeded, and

“Down with the parson!” echoed round.

These words reached Mr. Mervyn and Rose, as they sat in the dog-cart, the one trying to restrain his frightened horse; the other watching with eager terror her friend’s dark figure hustled amongst the motley assemblage.

“Do you hear, father! They will harm him!” whispered Rose. “Give me the reins, and go and rescue him. I can manage Dolly. She knows my voice.”

“They won’t hurt him! Whoa, Dolly, old girl! Be quiet, can’t you?” returned her father, partly to her, partly to his mare.

“Look, father! they are surrounding him!” cried Rose, springing out of the dog-cart while he was pulling in Dolly, and running off after the vicar.

“Rose! what are you about?” he exclaimed, standing up in affright to look after her, while his mare was growing more and more restive.

But he lost sight of her immediately, for she pierced the crowd in the direction of Mr. Edwardes, who was already remonstrating with the rioters on the sin of their proceedings, amid shouts of laughter and various comments.

“Where are you seeing in the Bible a command to keep God’s fish from starving people?” asked some one, in a disguised voice.

“Or His wild goats and conies?” another.

“Or to shut up His highways?” a third.

“Or to leave the gates with the enemies?” a fourth.

“Render unto Cæsar——” began Mr. Edwardes, when he was interrupted by Rose.

“Will you kindly let Mr. Edwardes come, for we are waiting, and the horse is restless,” she said, with a politeness and self-command that took effect.

“A new Rebecca!” cried one.

“The White Rose of Llyngwyn!”
another.

The leader suddenly pointed to the spot where the dog-cart stood, and whispered something to one of his followers, who was at Dolly's head in a moment, and thus enabled Mr. Mervyn to jump out, and pursue his daughter, with a muttered reproach at her folly.

“All the women are after Edwardes, and he don't care a rap for one of 'em. What is it they see in a parson?” he said to himself; then, as he pierced the Rebeccaites, he added aloud, “Well, my friends, you have got rid of it, have you? We shall all have a dish of salmon once more. Wish you joy. But you needn't harm a good man because you have got what you want. Come along, Edwardes. Rose, you have no business here.”

The vicar was declaiming at the top of his voice, and Rose stood in front of him, her white face reddened for once by the

glare of a torch held up to ascertain her identity. The Rebecca chief was close to her, his black face or mask contrasting with her white one; the motley figures of his grotesquely-clad men were on either bank of the river, while rocks and trees overshadowed the groups, and above all was the vast arch of night, spangled with stars. It was a curious scene for this our nineteenth century.

“Handsome Jack Mervyn, Llyngwyn,” was heard, when that individual appeared, and laid his hand on Rose’s shoulder.

But, although he was unquestionably handsome, and towered above the Rebeccaites, he had no power over them or their chief; for, even while he was endeavouring to draw Rose away, Madam Rebecca herself took the girl up in her arms, and carried her back to the dog-cart, while the rest closed round her father and the vicar.

All these proceedings were accomplished

without any noise, and in brief space, so that, almost before Rose knew what was done to her, she was lifted into the dog-cart, and had the dreaded Rebecca by her side. He, or she, as might be, stooped over the horse and whispered to the person who held it, then took the reins, and drove off in the direction of Llynhafod.

“Pray wait for my father and Mr. Edwardes!” said Rose, rousing herself from a state of genuine fear.

But Rebecca drove on and made no reply. Indeed, Dolly was so unmanageable that her ladyship had as much as she could do to prevent her running away. Rose nearly swooned with terror. To have this dreadful figure by her side was bad enough, but to leave her father and friend behind was worse still. However, she took courage to glance up at the black-faced, white-clad individual, and, having much penetration, was inclined to believe that he wore a mask. Her ideas of the invisible Satan

had been formed from the Bible ; of the visible, from Milton's "Paradise Lost ;" so she decided that her companion was, at least, human. She summoned such courage and strength as she could command to address him, but she had, for some time, the conversation to herself.

"Pray turn back," she said, "or stop and let me down. You will upset the dog-cart. Dolly is running away. Why do you carry me away from my father and Mr. Edwardes? I entreat you to wait for them. They will not harm you if only you release me. You have no right to do what you are doing."

But the more she remonstrated the harder and faster went the mare. The road wound past Glynglâs where Alfred Johnnes lived, and it seemed to her that Rebecca tried to turn up the drive that led to it; but Dolly refused to move in that direction, reared, and tore on homewards. When, however, she reached the

lane leading to Llynhafod, she slackened her pace, and no sooner did she do so than Rose felt an arm round her waist and heard in her ear these words, uttered in a low and unknown voice—

“Beware of Edwardes. He will never have you. Take your first offer, or your father will be the worse for it. Marry him who next proposes for you.”

Indignation at this liberty roused her, and she rose and seized the reins. Even while she did so Rebecca disappeared, she knew not how or where. She turned so cold with terror that the reins dropped from her hands, but happily they caught in the splashboard, and Dolly, as if freed from some unpleasant influence, trotted quietly homewards. But Rose was nearly insensible, and must have fallen from the dog-cart had she not been arrested by a well-known voice, which shouted out loudly somewhere in the lane. She vainly tried to shout in return, for terror had chained,

for the moment, her powers both of speech and movement. However, steps approached, and she knew that a friend was at hand.

This was Jim, one of her father's men, who had the charge of Dolly, and was a kind of friend and factotum of her mother's. Dolly neighed at the welcome words, "Here you are at last then, master. Missus is by the head with fear;" and Rose strove in vain to speak. But Jim soon saw that all was not right, and mounted to Rose's side. He asked for his master, and his answer came in a very unexpected manner, for she threw her arms round him, clung to him, and cried,

"Rebecca! Rebecca! A demon! a fiend! He is behind us now! Drive on, Jim; take me home. Rebecca, Rebecca!"

"Not she, miss *fach*. Keep you quiet, and she 'on't be hurting you," returned Jim, whipping up Dolly, who was as far from understanding late events as Rose, and, being spoilt, turned restive.

But they soon reached home. Mrs. Mervyn had heard the sound of wheels, and was waiting for them at the gate. She had a measured reproach for her husband on her lips, but it was stayed by his absence. Jim lifted out Rose, more dead than alive, and carried her to the house. But she roused herself at her mother's cry of "What is the matter? Where is your master?"

"He is just walking up the hill to be saving Dolly," said Jim, who would have vowed that a carrot was a parsnip to please his mistress and save his master from a lecture.

"He and Mr. Edwardes are at the salmon-weir with the Rebeccaites," said Rose, who never told an untruth. "One of them has—has—just left me." She shuddered. "You must send and rescue them, mother."

"Stop you. I am knowing——" began Jim, and paused. "I and Dolly will be

bringing them home 'rectly minute. Come you, mistress, you are liking salt salmon, and Mally she is pickle her beautiful. She will be cheap now, and we shall all be 'joying her."

Jim was proud of his English, and had the upper-hand of Mrs. Mervyn, because he was more fluent in that tongue than she in Welsh. The two languages greatly increased the household perplexities, which would have been inextricable sometimes but for Rose and Edwynna, who spoke both with equal fluency.

Mrs. Mervyn waved Jim away with an imperative "Go!" which, however, had not the desired effect, for Jim would not be driven. He had the last word.

"I was rearing them young pigeons beautiful, mistress. They are thinking I'm the old one," he said, with a condescending nod, and Rose laughed, in spite of her anxiety, while her mother was compelled to silence.

Jim was, however, soon driving disappointed Dolly back again towards the weir, and Rose related what had so lately passed to her mother, with the exception of Rebecca's few words at parting. For the first time in her life she saw her mother display genuine feeling and anxiety concerning her father. Hitherto she had borne her daily crosses with a sort of cold reserve; but, now there seemed to be real danger, it was different, and her face showed her emotion.

"Suppose they should murder him, Rose!" she exclaimed, walking excitedly up and down the hall. "Rioters are capable of any excesses. I should never forgive myself—never! And Llewellen away!"

"They will not injure father," returned Rose. "There is more danger for Mr. Edwardes than for him. Hark! I think I hear wheels. Come out and listen."

"But you can scarcely stand yourself,

child," said Mrs. Mervyn, who had forgotten Rose in her temporary anxiety about her husband, and who perceived that she walked with difficulty.

But Rose, with her usual self-command, assured her mother that she had recovered from her fright, and they went out together into the yard, and thence walked down the hawthorn lane, Rose starting at every shadow, lest her late uncanny companion should dart out upon them.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROSE'S SOLILOQUY.

THE Rebeccaites were at a loss what to do when their leader had disappeared. They amused themselves, therefore, by detaining Mervyn and the vicar, at the whispered request of the man who had stood at Dolly's head until Rebecca drove her and Rose away. It was in vain, therefore, that Mervyn strove to force a passage for himself and his friend through the motley crowd, or to overcome them by argument.

"I wish with all my heart the soldiers were down upon you at this minute!" he exclaimed, with irritation. "You deserve to be made food for the fish you hanker after."

“Ha, ha, handsome Jack Mervyn! The soldiers are guarding a gate ten miles off,” chuckled somebody, but he could neither recognize familiar voice nor face.

“You are no Welshman to be detaining a friend in this way,” he cried, knocking one or two of them over, and elbowing his way out.

“Down with the parsons and the squires, and let’s have their gates,” was the response.

“Silence, my friends,” here broke in Mr. Edwardes, like a Boanerges as he was. “Let me say a few words to you. You misunderstand the text you have chosen as an excuse for your evil deeds.”

“A sermon! a sermon! Stop you, handsome Jack, till we’ve heard the parson!” they cried.

Mervyn was compelled to obey, for he was only one amongst many.

“Fine readers of the Scriptures you are indeed, who don’t know that the gates were

not pikes to keep the road in order, but places of justice where the elders sat," began the vicar. "Why, Boaz 'sat in the gates,' and Eli fell off from his seat, and died 'by the gate,' and Ahab and Jehoshaphat sat on their thrones 'by the gate!' When Job went out 'to the gate,' the young men saw him, and hid themselves; not in women's garments, my friends, like you; but because he was wiser than they. One of the signs of Jerusalem's misery was that her elders no longer went 'to the gates;' but they didn't pull them down on that account. On the contrary, the prophet Zechariah commanded to execute truth and peace 'in the gates.' You execute vengeance! I wonder where you can find a text that bids you destroy your neighbour's salmon-weir as well as his gates?"

Before this very pertinent question could be considered or answered, the crowd uttered a simultaneous "hush!" for the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard.

“The Philistines be upon thee, Samson !” cried Mervyn, who under no circumstances could resist a joke. “Here come the soldiers !”

Scarcely had he spoken when the rioters had disappeared, where, not even he, who knew the neighbourhood, could imagine. He could only suppose that they had vanished amongst the rocks and through the woods. At any rate, he and Edwardes were left alone by the rushing, impetuous waters.

“Now you can come and preach to the soldiers,” he said, with a dry laugh. “Your chest is sound anyhow. I hope Rebecca has kept Rose and Dolly quiet, and done no harm to them.”

He led the way up the river's bank to where the dog-cart had been. All exclamations of dismay and surprise at its disappearance were cut short by the approach of a troop of cavalry that came galloping along the road.

Mervyn was naturally an easy-going man, until some special aggravation changed his nature. Then he was passionate and obstinate. Most people who knew him took care not to arouse these tempers. But on the present occasion they were aroused, not only by his late detention by the rioters, but by the disappearance of Rose and his dog-cart. He hastily decided to do what in cooler moments he would not have done, for he would not, willingly, endanger any man.

"Halt!" he exclaimed, as the military drew near. "We can put you on the scent of Rebecca, if that's what you're after. We've just had the honour of a personal interview, and, if you hadn't interrupted, Edwardes' sword would have cut her up like chaff."

Although this speech fell only on the ear of the vicar, the "Halt!" reached the soldiers, and Mervyn's height and voice were so commanding that they must have

thought him a general at least, and halt they did.

The officer in command rode up to him—and he told him in few words what had happened; pointed to the destroyed weir, and to the place where the rebels had been.

“We have just been to a gate towards which a countryman swore he had seen them going,” said the officer. “There was no sign of them.”

“Llanon Gate?” asked Mervyn.

“Yes, that is the name.”

“They have come this way instead. They have scouts everywhere. But this is certain, they were here five minutes ago, and have destroyed Wynne Manorsant’s salmon-weir, and carried off my daughter; unless Dolly, my mare, as I suspect, has been too fast for ’em, and taken her safe home.”

“May I ask your name and address?”

“Mervyn. I live at Llynhafod, up yonder by the lake.”

"How shall we best pursue the rebels?"

"By seeming not to pursue them at all, I should say. You must out-manceuvre them."

The officer laughed. It had been a wild-goose chase ever since the military had been in the country; and now the work of destruction was accomplished just as they reached the spot they had been warned to look after.

"Are you afraid? Can we protect you home?" asked the officer of Mr. Edwards.

"No, thank you; but you will kindly let us pursue our way. My friend's temper is roused; so is mine; still I would not willingly be a spy upon my country people."


The officer asked Mervyn if there were any by-roads that the rebels could have taken; but Mervyn assured him that he knew of none, and that the main road was the only chance of coming up with them.

And so they parted, the soldiers going one way, the friends another.

Mervyn was in hot haste, and the vicar could scarcely keep up with him ; but they walked on, almost in silence, until they were met by Jim and the dog-cart. Their relief and thankfulness were great when they heard that Rose was safe.

“ I will drive Mr. Edwardes home. Go you up the lane and say I shall be back directly, Jim,” said Mr. Mervyn, when they reached the road to Llynhafod.

He got Dolly past it with much difficulty, for she wanted her stable and her feed. No one was stirring in the village as her hoofs clattered through it, over the bridge, and up the steep that led to the vicarage. The church-tower loomed above them like a gaunt black ghost, standing to overlook the doings of the parish ; for beneath lay the slumbering hamlet, the swollen river, the bridge, and the rocks. They reached the vicarage at last, and wearied Dolly



rested a while. A sister of Mr. Edwardes, who acted as his housekeeper, came to the door. She was in the habit of keeping him in order, and had, like Mrs. Mervyn, always a reproach ready for his misdemeanour. "What's the matter? What makes you so late?" she asked.

But Mervyn did not stay to listen to explanations. Having deposited the vicar, he began to talk to offended Dolly; and no sooner was her head turned homewards than she recovered temper and strength to patter down the hill, over the bridge, and up the lane like mad. Jim was in waiting, having met his mistress and Rose, and ordered them in.

"You are all spoiling Dolly," he said, "I must be giving her a basting some day when Miss Rose isn't by. Go you in, master, or the sun will be up before we're abed. As if there wasn't work enough by day!"

Mervyn was never very anxious to re-

turn to his wife. He was what is called a "good fellow" abroad and very popular; but at home, without intending it, he was often silent, and even sulky. As the saying is, he hung up his fiddle outside his door.

He stole into his house by the back way, hoping that she might be in bed, but scarcely had he lifted the latch when he heard a cry and a fervent "Thank God!" in the passage. No one bade him wipe his shoes, but, almost before he was in the sitting-room, his wife's arms were round his neck, and, to his utter astonishment, his own encircled her, and a kiss of, at least the *appearance* of affection, was interchanged.

Rose stood near, her hands clasped, her lips parted. It was the first time she had ever witnessed thus much of love between her parents, whom she loved fervently but silently. And as she looked at them she could but think how grandly handsome was her father, and wonder whether her mother

had first met him dressed, as he then was, like a gentleman. Poor child! she was always wondering concerning her parents, and praying that it would please God to unite them in heart as well as in name.

She heard her father mutter in Welsh the words "*gwraig annwyl*," "darling wife," and wondered, again, if her mother understood him. Tears were streaming down that mother's face when the embrace was over, and Mervyn, confused and agitated, turned to ask Rose what had happened to her. She gave him an account of her drive with Rebecca, suppressing the warning concerning her marriage, and he grew, if possible, more irritated than ever against the rebels. However, he perceived that Rose trembled still with some sort of terror, and he bade her go at once to bed.

"You have had enough of bishops, parsons, and Rebeccas for one day, and so have I. If I ever sympathized with the

rapscallions—I mean the ladies, not the cloth—I never shall again.”

Rose obeyed mechanically. She was scarcely recovered from a sort of terrified dream, and the sight of her parents only bewildered her the more. They seemed almost ashamed of the emotion they had displayed in her presence, and her mother stood, shy and downcast as a girl, while her father, with what seemed assumed indifference, spoke with his customary brusque jocularity.

When she reached her room—which she shared with her sister, who was asleep—she tried to unravel the threads of her parents’ tangled skein of married life. Of course there was mystery somewhere; and she took it for granted that her mother must have married without the consent of her family; still this did not account for the studied and reserved forbearance of her mother, or the provoking and irritating ways of her father. The resolution of the

one to maintain the position of a lady seemed only to give an impetus to the other to relinquish that of a gentleman, which he would have held naturally, but for this contradictory disposition. Yet he was proud, and disliked her going as governess to Manorsant, though he constantly complained of his poverty.

“I think he would like me to marry Alfred Johnnes,” she thought, as she sat dejectedly on her sister’s little bed. “But he has not asked me, and I hope he never will. I wonder what that horrible figure meant by the warning? I wish I were young again, like Edwyna.”—There were four years between the sisters, and Rose was just eighteen.—“And what could it have meant by those words concerning Mr. Edwardes? He whom I love almost as my own father, and who has been always so kind to me? Are all girls subject to jests and suspicions if they do but speak to an unmarried man when they are grown

up? But it is, as mother says, only vulgar gossip. Still that horrible figure meant more than a mere trick by its actions and words. I almost dread the morrow, lest there should be some result."

Poor Rose shuddered between fear and chill, as she knelt down by her bedside and commended herself and those she loved to the care of One who, she knew, could overcome evil with good.

CHAPTER IX.

ROSE DISREGARDS REBECCA'S WARNING.

THE destruction of Mr. Wynne's salmon-weir caused, naturally, great excitement. But neither military nor magistrate could lay hold of Rebecca. The people wondered, open-mouthed, but brought no evidence; and poor old Mr. Wynne grew more nervous than ever. His son, however, blustered, and declared his intention of making a new weir; while his wife kept open house for the officers, and gave dinner-parties and dances in their honour. None the less did threatening letters continue; and everybody asked, what would come next? The farmers and peasantry were, however,

tolerably easy, for they had much to gain and nothing to lose by the riots, so long as they kept silent and looked innocent.

Rose was, perhaps, the most anxious person in Llansant parish. She could not get over her drive with Rebecca, or the ominous words spoken to her. She had not ventured to repeat them to her parents, for fear of rousing their anger or fear on her account; neither could she confide in her constant friend Mr. Edwardes, because of the warning concerning him, of which she could not even think without a certain shame; for how could Rebecca know whether she cared for him or not? As to marriage, or offers, she had scarcely even thought of such things, no one having ventured to annoy her with jests hitherto; but now she was continually dreading what young girls usually desire. And if it came—this prophesied proposal—and if she could not accept it—what might be the consequences to her father? She tried to

laugh at the mysterious terror that overwhelmed her ; but she was by nature nervously constituted, and she was always combating the invisible and ideal with that resolution which sensitive people often possess.

She had been in the habit of visiting the vicarage at will ; but this ridiculous threat prevented her going thither for several days. However, she summoned courage, and went at last.

“ Had it been Edgar, there might have been more sense in it,” she thought, as she crossed the threshold.

“ I fancied you were never coming again, Rose,” said the stiff but kindly Miss Leah. “ Edwynna has been a dozen times, at least, the darling, to your `once.”

“ I wished to come, but——” began Rose, pausing because she could not give the exact reason.

“ Ah, Rose, my dear, I am glad to see you alive and well,” said Mr. Edwardes,

coming in at the moment. "I hope you have praised the Lord for your deliverance, and prayed that my poor words may take effect on those rebellious children of Jezebel, for certainly they have nothing in common with her whose name they assume."

"I have, Mr. Edwardes," replied Rose, relieved from a nameless fear, she knew not why or how.

"I suppose Rebecca carried you off to frighten your father and me into silence," he resumed. "But she is mistaken in her men, and took the wrong way. It only irritated your father, who, I fear, has been talking a little too openly about it, and gave me an opportunity that I had been long looking for, and, indeed, preparing for. They are but rebellious children after all; and I am thankful that I was enabled to speak boldly to them. How are your young rebels, my dear? The children, I mean."

"I really think they are getting more

obedient. Were it not for Teddy, I could manage them. Pussy is so very dear that I can scarcely help spoiling her."

"And Virginie? Take care of her. She is sly, and never comes to church. I preach her a sermon whenever I meet her, and she is profoundly attentive; but I see no fruit. Fruit, indeed! I am always looking for it, and when it comes much of it is rotten at the core. Smooth-faced hypocrites half of those who profess. I should not say so, perhaps, but, on the contrary, lay on more manure at the root of the trees. You, also, have a great work, Rose. I call teaching a grand work. Patience, perseverance, firmness, kindness, are needed. Why, my dear, you are training plants for Heaven."

"If only I could, Mr. Edwardes!" ejaculated Rose, forgetting all her anxiety concerning her relations with her pastor in intercourse with the man himself, who was straightforward and single-minded.

She left him, as she always did, invigorated for her part in the world's strife. But as she was hastening homewards she met Alfred Johnnes, who generally had a contrary effect upon her.

"You are always in a hurry, Miss Mervyn," he said. "What an age you have been with the vicar! I hope you are none the worse for your fright. Jim tells me Dolly ran away with you and brought you safe home, while your father and the parson were preaching to Rebecca. Jim is as tight as a vice. One can't get a word more out of him than he chooses to say."

Rose was much relieved by Jim's "tightness," for she did not wish her drive with Rebecca to be known, particularly by Alfred Johnnes.

"We are all well, thank you," she replied; "though we were horrified at the wicked work of destruction of the weir, and the unnatural conduct of the rioters."

"Were you? I was delighted, for we

have had our share of sewen these last three days. I suppose your father has learnt his lesson as I learnt mine. I shall not interfere any more. I am going to turn over a new leaf and be a steady fellow."

"It is surely time," said Rose, who always felt disposed to preach a little when she had been with Mr. Edwardes.

"Will you help me?" asked Alfred, suddenly, fixing his dark and very piercing eyes upon her.

"If I can, but I know not how," she returned.

"By going to yonder church with me, and taking me 'for better for worse,' as the prayer-book says," he said, somewhat jauntily, pointing to the solemn black tower that rose behind them.

"With you! What next!" exclaimed Rose, hurrying on.

"What next? Why, then we should be man and wife, and lead a pretty sight

jollier life than your father and mother. I am quite in earnest, though you do not believe me. Rose, you must not run away, for if you will not listen I shall write to your father, and then you will be obliged to say 'Yes' or 'No.'"

They had turned into the hawthorn lane, and were alone with the flowers that bloomed and the birds that warbled around and above them, as they are fabled to do for lovers. Lovers! "Was this, then, the first offer that she was advised by Rebecca to accept?" Rose asked herself, as she and this handsome, careless, yet, she felt, resolute man, stood a moment side by side beneath the flowering May. It was the last day of the joyous month that had the white blossom for name-child, and not during its course of thirty-one days had it looked on a comelier pair—he dark, ruddy, manly; she fair, sweet, and graceful. "The first offer!" She might certainly have a worse. She was silent, as if to

consider it, feeling that her time had come, and with a sort of conviction that she must not be rash. He, not unnaturally, thought that "silence gave consent," and, while her deep eyes were fixed on a hawthorn spray which her fingers touched insensibly, he pleaded his cause. She, however, broke in upon his rapid and somewhat egotistical speech with a repetition of his own words.

"Man and wife," she said, slowly. "I do not think we are suited, Alfred Johnnes. And what of Elgain?"

Without waiting for an answer, she turned, and walked rapidly up the lane. Her walk, as we have said, had been compared to the gliding of a ghost, it was so quick and noiseless. Now, without seeming to run, she actually ran; and before Alfred could sufficiently recover from her unexpected answer to his proposal to pursue her, she had vanished, leaving him planted, as it were, beneath the hawthorn-tree.

“What of Egain?” he repeated. “What does she know of that? Has the girl peached? But she shall have me whether or not. I am not to be daunted.”

Thus muttering, he turned on his heel, a heavy frown on his brow, and a curse on his lips.

Meanwhile Rose reached the little side gate that led to her home through the long orchard and kitchen-garden, and entered thankfully.

She found her mother and Jim in the tiny flower-garden, disputing, as they often did, on an orthographical subject; for Jim was self-opinionated, and would not yield, even to his mistress, in spite of his exalted estimation of her learning. He had constituted himself gardener, as well as groom, drover, and waggoner; and having some learning, and more acute observation, was always “improving himself,” as he expressed it, both orally and by books.

“Look at the *anemoans*, mistress,” he

had been saying, as Rose approached. "I am wishing Jones, gardener, Manorsant, was seeing them."

"They are called *anemonés*, Jim," corrected Mrs. Mervyn, for the hundredth time.

"Just as you please, ma'am, but 'tis *anemoans* in the book," persisted Jim, confidently, to Rose's amusement, as she came in for the fag end of the dispute.

"These pig-headed Welsh!" muttered Mrs. Mervyn, as Edwyna also made her appearance, breathless and dishevelled.

"I saw you run away from Alfred Johnnes, Rose!" she exclaimed. "I was trying to overtake you, and, just as I had caught you up, off you were like my sheep, Gwenny. He told me to tell you that you are quite mistaken. What did he mean? He looked uncommonly cross, and I thought he would have eaten me up, like the ogres!"

"I wish you would not run about the

country as you do, Edwyna!" said her mother.

"I only went to see the soldiers. They have been exercising in the park; and I meant to come home with Rose, and missed her. Madoc, corporal, says that they're as fine a troop as ever he saw, even at Waterloo—he never forgets Waterloo, you know, nor do I, because it is Egain's birthday, and she was born while the battle was being fought. I wish I was a soldier, and had been born in the midst of a battle. But I should like to belong to our own regiment, the forty-second Welsh Fusiliers, the bravest in the whole Army, and not to the Dragoons."

"I am finding *Dragon* in the dictionary," said Jim, oracularly. "It means a serpent with wings, and not a soldier at all."

Edwyna was as obstinate and disputatious as Jim, and Rose took the opportunity of a rising argument to beckon her mother into the house. She at once con-

fided to her the proposal she had just received from Alfred Johnnes; but she did not mention Egain, since what she knew or suspected of the relations existing between her and Alfred were more or less confidential. When Mrs. Mervyn asked her eagerly what answer she had given, she told her that she had replied that she did not consider they were suited.

“You are quite right,” said her mother, much relieved. “But your father will not agree with you; he considers Mr. Johnnes a desirable match. He certainly is handsome and tolerably well educated. *You* do not care for him, I hope, Rose? *You* are not taken by good looks?”

She fixed her eyes eagerly on her daughter, whose face betrayed neither emotion nor consciousness. But then, as she knew, Rose was self-contained.

“My dear mother, I have never thought of such things until now,” she replied, innocently. “I do not wish to leave you,

and just now I have too much on my mind to begin to think of them. I have enough to do to learn how to teach, and to find answers to the wonderful questions the children put. It is as much as I can do to keep ahead of them, in spite of your good instruction."

Mrs. Mervyn hoped that Rose was still "fancy-free," but she had never yet, or so she imagined, quite fathomed her mind. She did not know that this child, concerning whose future she was so anxious, lived in continual dread of displeasing one parent by agreeing with another; and that much, if not all of her inner life, was spent in seeking to reconcile in her own mind the silent discord between them.

Indeed, Mrs. Mervyn was so reserved herself that she failed in any effort she made to court the confidence of her husband and children. Her feelings were her own; and, while she would often have given worlds to be able to express them,

she still kept them close within the narrow limits of her own breast. Rose was only too much like her, and consequently they rarely understood one another.

Edwyna, on the contrary, disdained concealment, and, when she had finished her dispute with Jim, she burst into the room, exclaiming,

“Everybody’s alike. Nobody speaks the truth. Here’s Jim, when I tell him he has said a story, faces me out, and grunts like a pig, and answers with, ‘What for I tell the truth to you, miss? You not my mistress. I tell the truth to her, and nobody else.’ Now, mother, you ought to teach him better. And here’s Rose, when I ask her what Alfred Johnnes meant, holds her tongue as if she was dumb. I say that’s as good as a story.”

In another moment Edwyna had her arms round Rose, and declared that she would “pay her out,” if she would not tell; which “paying out” consisted in her

uplifting the unresisting Rose, and carrying her round the room; for, as we have said, the girl was a determined romp, and as muscular and strong as her sister was delicate.

This little episode served to turn the current of affairs for the moment, by bringing down Mrs. Mervyn's displeasure on her youngest born.

The fact was that Edwyna's love for Rose was so engrossing that she would brook no secrecy, and, as yet, nothing had occurred to the elder which she wished to conceal from the younger; though henceforth it might be different.

CHAPTER X.

VISIONS.

WAS there ever a match as to the desirability of which all the parties concerned agree? If the young people are unanimous, their elders differ, and *vice versa*; or, if the masculine element is favourable, the feminine is adverse. Mr. Mervyn was all for Rose's accepting Alfred Johnnes; and the cheerful sunshine that for a week or more had brightened his and his wife's life was again obscured. They had a dispute, which ended, as disputes usually do, by each party retaining his and her original opinion. Rose came in for the fag end of it, when Mr. Mervyn was too much excited to heed her presence,

and his wife's habitual self-control was ineffectual to check his hasty words.

"Alfred Johnnes is good enough for *my* daughter, and it was not *my* fault that you lowered yourself to *my* rank," she heard her father say. "If your friends choose to come forward and get her a finer gentleman for a husband, well and good."

"You know, Mr. Mervyn, what they said," her mother returned, not conscious that she was within earshot. "They will be happy to receive us when you—or—or I—" she paused, perceiving Rose in the doorway.

"When you consider my manners good enough for their company," supplied Mr. Mervyn. "I am not ambitious of being received, but you can go when you and they like, Mrs. Mervyn. I shall do the best I can for my children, in spite of my grand connections. Ha, ha!"

"Come in, Rose," said Mrs. Mervyn, as the girl hesitated. "I hope you have finished your work for to-night?"

She had been reading and studying for her small pupils' lessons on the morrow, in the vain hope of being able to answer their extraordinary questions. She came forward timidly, for she always dreaded being dragged into the disputes of her parents, and especially being appealed to concerning them. Her father never failed to try to enlist her on his side, however trivial the subject, and everybody knows the difficulty of keeping clear of giving offence to one party or the other on such occasions.

“Come in, girl; what on earth are you afraid of?” exclaimed Mervyn; “though I must say your mother is enough to aggravate a saint. We were talking of you—of your marriage, in short. I hear that you have had an offer which will make you mistress of a respectable house instead of three spoilt children. I hope you mean to accept it at once, without shilly-shallying.”

Rose looked from one parent to another in perplexity. She always seemed to herself a bone of contention between them ; and now, what with the words she had just heard, Rebecca's warning, Egain, and her desire to please them both, she stood silent and irresolute.

"Silence gives consent," said her father, "and we shall only need to transplant our white rose to the blue glen."

"Oh ! no, dear father. Let me stay where I am. I should wither if I were transplanted," said Rose, with a smile, thankful to carry on her father's simile.

"You are more likely to wither over your books, and walks to and from Manor-sant," replied Mr. Mervyn. "What did you say to Alfred Johnnes ?"

"That I thought we were not suited," returned Rose, her eyes drooping and her hands moving nervously.

"Not suited ! Why ? I suppose this is your teaching, Mrs. Mervyn ?"

“Oh! no, father. I assure you I was quite taken by surprise, and answered naturally, as I felt.”

“Then sleep upon it, my girl, and think it over. You have plenty of sense, and must know that a wealthy, respectable, handsome young fellow is not to be met with every day in these quiet parts. Not that I would have you marry him for his looks,” added Mr. Mervyn, glancing at his wife, who was trembling for Rose. “Women always repent of that.”

“Perhaps we had better all sleep upon it,” said Mrs. Mervyn, quietly and severely. “It is time for prayers. Will you be good enough to ring the bell.”

So, in no very good frame of mind, they assembled their household; for, notwithstanding untoward circumstances, they never neglected family worship, and doubtless this had tended to keep the husband and wife together during all these years of regrets—this, and their children.

Rose soon forgot her trouble in that consoler of the young and innocent, sleep. Still, before she could invite the wand of this soft-winged, gentle-footed friend, she had to endure many questions from Edwynna concerning the meaning of Alfred Johnnes. The sisters contrasted in most respects. Edwynna, like her father, was hot-tempered when much crossed, Rose, reserved and gentle.

“I know he wants to marry you, and you won’t tell me,” Edwynna exclaimed, as she laid her rosy cheek and curly head on the pillow. “I am sure I don’t care. You and mother are as close as Silly Shanno’s Polly, who always holds her tongue when we want her to speak. I daresay you’ll tell Mr. Edwardes all about it.”

“Indeed I shall not, Edwynna,” responded the aggrieved Rose. “I wish you were not so inquisitive. One would think you were a woman.”

“I shall be one soon, and then be you

sure I won't tell you any of my secrets. No! I don't think I shall kiss you good-night."

But Rose put her arms round the wild, merry girl, who was, as she said, soon to become a woman, and the sisters quickly slept the sleep of love and peace.

But while they slumbered through the night there was a stir in the rest of the house. Jim, who, for some reason best known to himself, had been out late, had discovered that an outstanding hayrick in a solitary field belonging to his master, was on fire. Now Jim, whatever his principles and inclinations concerning the Rebeccaites, was staunch to his master and his family, and he would not admit, even to himself, that it could have been set on fire maliciously. He knocked at Mr. Mervyn's window to arouse him, and, when he put his head out, said,

"That old rick has been and taken fire of herself after all, master. I was telling

you so. I do wonder why it has kept its steam in so long."

"Wake up Davy; I'll be down directly," said Mr. Mervyn, shutting his window.

Jim and Davy were the only men who slept on the farm. The other labourers lived either in the village or in cottages round about. Mr. Mervyn dressed quickly, speaking to his wife as he did so. He had forgotten all about Rose, for he seldom remembered an offence long.

"If they have a grudge against me it is because I told the soldiers about them that night when they carried off Rose. I don't believe they set it on fire. It is no great matter if they did, and only poor hay, and not much of it left, at best."

When he was gone, Mrs. Mervyn roused her two women-servants. She was of Spartan breed, and, whatever her birth, did her best to superintend her household, and to practise economy.

It was daylight when her husband re-

turned, and he was not sorry to find a fire and a steaming kettle. He thanked her heartily, and told her that there was no doubt about the rick. He was evidently greatly annoyed, and his language, happily in Welsh, was none of the choicest. Somebody had set fire to it, and, as it was far from the lake, they could not put it out. Some of the neighbours had seen it, and come to their aid, but it was too late. What was not burnt of the hay was spoilt. Not that he cared so much for his loss as for the hostile act. A careless, easy, good-natured man himself, he could not realize that anything he could do or say could rouse enmity against him amongst his own countrymen.

When Rose and Edwyna came down to breakfast, and heard the event of the night, the former was silent, for she felt assured that in some mysterious way Rebecca's threat was taking effect because of her partial rejection of Alfred Johnnes. The

latter, on the contrary, was vehement in her protestations concerning the intentions of her Welsh friends the Rebeccaites, and she carried her father with her.

“I agree with Jim. The old rick took fire of its own accord. Speckle has a nest there, and it was smoking like a pipe the other day when I went to look for eggs. I hope they haven't burnt Speckle. Back in a minute, mother!”

Before Mrs. Mervyn could remonstrate Edwyna was off in search of Speckle, and Mr. Mervyn's chagrin was lost in laughter; for he was always amused by Edwyna's strong opinions, and delighted at her country pursuits, and resolution to be housekeeper and farmer for the whole family.

“You will keep watch, father?” asked Rose, anxiously, as she prepared to leave for Manorsant.

“Those sleep best who watch least,

Rose. But take this note to the squire. He will think it serious if I don't, and shake in his shoes for the safety of his own ricks."

Rose did as she was bid, and she had scarcely begun lessons when she was once more summoned to Mr. Wynne's breakfast-room. He was not alone. What seemed to Rose a gorgeous vision greeted her, in the person of an officer in full uniform, seated at breakfast with Mr. Wynne. Her father's note was open on the table, and had occasioned her summons. Both gentlemen rose as she entered. Mr. Wynne shook hands with her, pointed to the easy-chair she had once before occupied, and introduced the *vision*.

"Miss Mervyn—Major Faithfull. I think you have met before," said the old gentleman, who never forgot for a moment, or under any circumstances, what was due to those with whom he came in contact.

“At the luncheon in honour of the bishop, I think,” said Major Faithfull, bowing.

Rose was nervous, but not confused. She saw before her a genuine soldier, with well-cut moustache, bronzed features, and eyes that seemed once more to look her through, as she made her timid but graceful inclination to him. He was young for a major; but then he had seen service.

“I have taken the liberty to send for you to ask for further particulars of last night’s incendiarism,” began Mr. Wynne, who was evidently trembling with alarm. “Major Faithfull is on duty, and rejoins his regiment immediately, that is why he is breakfasting with me, my dear; for, as you know, my daughter-in-law is—well, rather late in the morning.”

Rose told all that she knew of the burning of the rick, which threw no further light on the note, but she added that their man Jim said it had ignited through damp.

"We have had rather dry weather for that," laughed Major Faithfull. "I believe it was your father who gave me the intelligence concerning the weir?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Rose.

"And you were the young lady carried off by Rebecca on that occasion?"

"Yes."

"Miss Mervyn, would you have any objection to relate what occurred after we had the pleasure of sitting opposite you at the Llangoch luncheon?" asked Mr. Wynne. "A very pretty repast indeed, and well served. Edwardes was your *cavaliere servente*, I think. Could not have a better. Wonderful man, the Bishop. I have just been reading his 'Greece.' But the Major is in a hurry. Will you kindly tell us exactly what you saw when the weir was destroyed?"

Mr. Wynne rubbed his hands over the fire as if it were December instead of June.

Rose gave the required details up to the

point where she was forcibly taken to the dog-cart by Rebecca, and driven off. There she hesitated, and a sort of terror gave expression to her eyes. Major Faithfull was looking at her intently while she was addressing Mr. Wynne.

“You had disappeared when your father fell in with us,” said the Major. “What did this formidable Rebecca do with you?”

Her frightened glance met his penetrating one, and, if his men said of him that it would be impossible to tell a lie while he was looking at them, Rose would be still more incapable of so doing. He smiled, and his smile was as irresistible as his decision.

“He drove me part of the way home, and vanished,” she said, in a low voice. “But I would rather this were not known,” she added, with an appealing glance.

“I think your secret is safe with us,” said Major Faithfull, kindly, looking from her to Mr. Wynne.

“Certainly, my dear. I am sure I would not mention it for worlds. If Rebecca had driven me, I should have gone out of my mind at once. You are a wonderful young lady to have preserved yours; don’t you think so, Major?” asked the squire.

“Yes, if Miss Mervyn chances to be afraid of men in women’s garments,” replied that gentleman. “But no *man* would, I imagine, voluntarily annoy one so——” Here he paused, and the compliment on his lips died a natural death, possibly because he felt that it might soil the purity of the soul into which he was about to breathe it; and it were well for innocent girlhood did more Major Faithfulls wear Her Majesty’s uniform. “But you were not afraid of so dull and stupid a trick, played by so foolish an Amazon?” he added, looking at Rose.

“I nearly fainted with terror,” she replied, truthfully. “But our man re-assured

me, and I hope I may be more courageous if I fall in with Rebecca again."

She shivered involuntarily as she said this, and the Major suspected that even more had passed than she cared to reveal.

"My time is up," he said, looking at his watch, and rising.

She also rose, and he opened the door and held it while she wished Mr. Wynne good morning; then, as she passed out, he bowed low, and thought, in his turn, that he also had seen a vision.

CHAPTER XI.

ROSE, THE MAJOR, AND SILLY SHANNO.

MOST of us know the stir that the arrival of the military makes in a country neighbourhood. After the destruction of the salmon-weir, Major Faithfull's regiment was quartered at the small town of Llanmaes, about three miles from Llansant, and everybody, gentle and simple, ran after the soldiers. It was bad times for the civilians, and rural beaux hung their heads in disgust at seeing rural belles overtaken by what has not inaptly been called the scarlet fever. As to Llansant itself, thanks to the Corporal and Mrs. Wynne, it had the disease malignantly.

While the officers were entertained at the Manor, orderlies might be seen galloping through the village, and soldiers lounging at the "Angler's Arms," or chattering at the turnpike they came to defend; for Llansant pike was well known to be still threatened by the rioters.

They, however, did not make their appearance in that neighbourhood after the destruction of the weir, but amused themselves by pulling down gates and committing other excesses in more distant parts of the country. There was, therefore, a temporary lull in Llansant parish, and Rose began to forget her terror, and her father his rick. They saw nothing of Alfred Johnnes at that period, and Rose hoped that her hint concerning Egain had taken effect, and that he would cease to pursue her, and not carry his threat of writing to her father into effect.

She was in the habit of walking daily with her pupils for an hour, in and about

the Manorsant grounds, and she more than once met Major Faithfull, who never failed to take his hat off to her, and stop to speak to the children. He had been each time accompanied by one or more other persons, whom she had not known, and she had walked quietly on until her boisterous young friends rejoined her.

On one occasion, however, she encountered him alone. She had returned home across the meadows, and by the lake. It was a delicious June afternoon, between five and six o'clock, and the temptation to linger on the water was so great that, instead of paddling her coracle straight across as usual, she rather skirted the lake. This brought her on a line with the ruined abbey, and she remembered that she had a message to an old woman who had taken up her abode in a partially habitable portion of the ruin. She was not conscious that she was watched as she rowed along; now gazing at the serene depths of the

summer sky above, now at the sun-tipped hills, anon at the mighty oaks that overtopped the abbey. A chorus of happy songsters accompanied her as she glided on, and finally moored her strange bark; and it was not surprising that the watcher on the abbey exclaimed, "The lady of the lake" and descended from his point of observation to obtain a nearer view of what seemed to him an ideal picture.

Thus it was that when she landed, and entered the ruin, she encountered Major Faithfull.

"Miss Mervyn!" he exclaimed, much surprised.

The hot blood rushed to Rose's cheeks, though they betrayed no sign, as she bowed to him and was about to pass on. He arrested her by a question.

"Are you not afraid of rowing on the lake alone?"

"Oh no! I have always been used to it, and some one is generally watching for me.

But the hay is cut to-day, and I suppose they are late, because so busy."

"They? May I ask who?" he inquired, with hesitation.

"My father and sister, or my brother when he is at home," she replied.

She was about to pass him, but the temptation to improve the acquaintance of so fair a creature was too strong for the soldier, and he hazarded another inquiry.

"Would you kindly tell me the name of this lake and abbey?"

"Llyngwyn, or the White Lake, and the ruin is called Castellyn."

"Thank you. I suppose there are legends connected with them, of monks and fairies. I have read one to-day already while watching you in your coracle from the abbey window, or what was once a window."

Rose smiled, and stayed her steps, to give the desired information.

"This neighbourhood abounds with

legends. There is a printed history of the ruin, which was built either in the eleventh or twelfth century, and destroyed in the time of Cromwell," she began.

"Naughty Nol! What has he not to answer for?" broke in the Major. "And the lake? Has it any fairy besides yourself?"

"It is said to have a real fairy, or spirit, that has been frequently seen, and always appears on Midsummer Eve," replied Rose, becoming interested and more at ease.

"Will you tell me the legend?" asked the Major.

"You will probably think it foolish, as my mother does," returned Rose, "but I quite believe in it. The White Lady has been fabled to row on the lake at midnight from time out of mind. The legend is that a young farmer watched for her, saw her, and fell in love with her."

“What was she like?” asked the Major, amused with Rose’s earnestness.

“She was very beautiful, with long golden hair floating over her, and face and arms white as the snow of the mountains.”

“She must have been like you!” ejaculated the Major.

“Oh! she was tenfold fairer and lovelier than I,” said Rose, with a smile. “The legend went: that if mortal spoke to her, she would disappear and return no more; so the young farmer played upon his flute and attracted her attention, as she rowed about in her golden boat with her golden oar.”

“And did this Orpheus with his lute succeed?” asked the Major.

“Yes, after much perseverance; he played every night for a long time, but she did not return till Midsummer Eve came round. Then she landed and listened to his music, until he ventured to address her. This broke the spell, and she disap-

peared ; but he still played on, and she came again and again, until, at last, he followed her to her green home somewhere beyond the bottomless lake."

"Drowned himself for hopeless love of the White Lady?" asked the Major.

"No; he only followed her, as she beckoned to him. They went together to the cool grottoes and pearly caves that lie where mortals cannot penetrate, but, as the legend says, where the water-spirits dwell."

"A cold honeymoon indeed! Did the hapless youth ever return to earth, or was he content with his spiritual bride?" laughed the Major.

"You are too sceptical to believe in our legendary lore," replied Rose; "but some people have even affirmed they have seen him with her in the boat on Midsummer Eve. I could tell you more marvellous tales than this."

"And I would gladly listen. But Mid-

summer Eve will soon be here, and I should much like to see this spiritual watery pair. Did you ever meet either of them face to face?" said Major Faithfull, looking into Rose's dreamy eyes.

"Never; but I mean to watch for the White Lady at midnight on Midsummer Eve, if I am permitted," she answered.

"Are you not afraid of the supernatural? or, what is more to the purpose, of Rebecca, who so politely drove you home? I am informed that the encampment yonder, which I have just been exploring, is one of Her Majesty's strongholds on which she lights her beacons."

"I would rather meet the White Lady than Rebecca," said Rose, shuddering. "But my father thinks she has done all she means to do in these parts, for there has been no bonfire of late."

"I am not of his opinion, neither is your shrewd gatekeeper, the old soldier down below, with whom I have been talk-

ing. At any rate, we are prepared for her. I hope I am not detaining you?" he returned.

"I came to see Silly Shanno. She lives in the ruin," replied Rose, who felt as if she would have liked to prolong the conversation with so polished an officer, albeit a sceptic to her pretty fancies.

But prudence, of which she had an unusual share, caused her to wish him good evening, and proceed to an ancient door not far from the spot where they stood. He watched her, and thought he had never seen so beautiful a figure set in so picturesque and quaint a frame. As she tapped at the arched door she glanced back, and the white face and graceful form seemed strangely suited to the ruined arches and window-frames, through which the sunshine streamed down upon her.

An old woman answered her summons, whose singular appearance riveted his attention for the moment. She was in Welsh

costume, and was large, bony, and grey-headed. But round about the high conical hat were flowers and feathers of many kinds and colours; while bits of fringe and lace adorned her scarlet cloak. She laughed aloud when she saw Rose, and almost dragged her inside her queer dwelling. Major Faithfull could not resist the impulse of curiosity which sent him to the open door, nor the sudden interest that detained him in the embrasure of the doorway. He stood to watch Rose and the mad woman, as he thought her, as the one sat down and the other moved about fantastically. Rose talked in Welsh, Shanno gesticulated, and almost danced round her; and, but for Rose's clear musical laugh, he would have feared for her safety. The high, arched room had a huge stone chimney-piece, within which, on a broken hearth-stone, were the embers of a peat fire, and some one had kindly glazed the ruined window. A cupboard

bedstead stood in one corner, and there was besides, as furniture, a rickety table and one or two stools. Upon the stone walls were either hung or pasted a variety of coloured prints; and bits of many-hued ribbons, prints, and papers were suspended from the various half-defaced carved ornaments that appeared on all sides.

Suddenly a parrot flew from some dark niche, and, perching on Shanno's hat, began chattering a sentence in Welsh, of which he made out the words, "Rose, Polly, and Shanno." The translation would be "White Rose, give Polly and Silly Shanno a kiss." The White Rose complied by getting up from her stool and offering her lips to the parrot, which put his bill between them, and clucked or chirped a kiss, as parrots will. The ancient walls, meanwhile, echoed with Shanno's laugh, and the Major thought of Meg Merrilies, "The Monastery," and other of Scott's romances.

Watcher and watched were suddenly startled by the sound of a high, clear, youthful voice, which rang through the air like some musical instrument. He turned, to see Edwynna running at full speed round the lake. She was hatless, her brown curls floated, and her garments were disordered. "Rose! Rose!" was the burden of her song.

The call was instantly answered by Rose, who came out of the quaint room, followed by Shanno, and perceived Major Faithfull.

"I must apologize for seeming to watch you," he said, with embarrassment, "but this mad woman's strange figure attracted me; and, indeed, you seemed scarcely safe alone with her."

"She is not mad, only she has lost her wits. We call her Silly Shanno," replied Rose, just as Edwynna came running towards them.

"Tea is waiting, and mother is as cross as——" said Edwynna; then perceiving the

stranger she changed her sentence, and added, "There he is, Rose. That is the officer who looked so grand in his livery."

"Uniform, you mean," whispered Rose.

"Yes, of course. But why doesn't he always wear it? He looks just like anyone else without it."

The Major, though still within the doorway, and the sisters without, caught this colloquy, and laughed; which roused an imitative cacchination from Polly. Silly Shanno and Edwyna took it up, so that the ruin was once more alive with merriment. Rose alone strove to maintain her decorum. The Major came out of his embrasure; and, as if to cover some confusion on his own side, and to speak to Rose again, said,

"I have had the honour of an introduction to you. Will you introduce me to this young lady?"

"It is my sister," she replied. "Edwyna, this is Major Faithfull."

"Now may I speak to you when I meet

you?" asked Edwyna. "Mother says young ladies must not notice gentlemen until they are introduced. But I am not a young lady, you know, only a milkmaid."

"I hope you will always speak to me," replied the Major, holding out his hand.

"Then all the girls will be so jealous of me that they will be as spiteful as Polly when I tease her," she exclaimed, taking it.

"Pretty Polly!" echoed the bird, suddenly darting down upon Edwyna's sunny curls.

"I don't mind her. We fight it out. But she is sure to bite you," she cried, as Major Faithfull was about to lay hold of the bird, which did in effect snap at him.

Edwyna would gladly have exhibited Polly's accomplishments, but Rose moved away, with a glance at Major Faithfull and a quiet "good afternoon;" then, bidding Shanno come with them and have some tea, she turned homewards, followed by

Edwyna, with Polly on her head, and the witless Shanno.

Major Faithfull watched the picturesque group as they wound through the trunks of the large oaks, and vanished into a path leading to the farm. He forgot for the moment that he was engaged to dine with Mr. Wynne at seven, and stood with his eyes fixed upon the green, sun-tipped covert, even after the figures had disappeared. Accustomed to worldly and fashionable conventionalities, he had yet to learn that even in the nineteenth century there were still remote spots in mountainous districts where nature held her sway over human beings; and where grace, beauty, and innocence could be found, even though partially beyond the grasp of modern etiquette and civilisation.

He had admired Rose at the luncheon, and had been struck by the simple grace of her manner at Mr. Wynne's breakfast-table; but he was fascinated by her as The

Lady of the Lake and gentle friend of the poor mad woman. Fanciful thoughts passed through his mind, which had not entered it for many a day, and he said to himself, "Now a man might be excused for falling in love with such a girl as that." But he did not allude to himself, but some imaginary swain, for he had his mistress already, and her name was Glory.

CHAPTER XII.

LATE FOR DINNER.

SILLY SHANNO was not quite so mad as she looked. Just as Major Faithful, remembering his dinner, was about to leave the Abbey, she re-appeared in the distance, and overtook him. She was sane enough to show the ruin to the few strangers who visited it, and had, apparently, remembered him; for she suddenly withdrew Polly from Edwyna's head, and left her young friends. Few people are indifferent to money, and she was not one of them. She was in the habit of receiving coin from all who came to explore, and did not choose to let the Major escape. He had no desire to do so, having had a

shilling in his hand for her when she left him. He gave it to her at once, and she danced and gesticulated frantically on receiving it. She had picked up a few words of English, but not sufficient to answer the inquiries he made concerning Rose; though she gave him to understand, by gestures, that she lived not far off. As he had no time to spare, he left her at once; but stopped, nevertheless, at the turnpike to inquire of the corporal concerning her, and also, incidentally, of Rose and her sister.

It was the old story. Silly Shanno had been crossed in love in her youth, had experienced many troubles, and had lost her wits like many another poor weak-brained creature. Happily for her, she had staunch friends at Llynhafod, who protected her, and resisted all attempts to send her to an asylum. It was said that she had once frightened Mrs. Philipps Wynne, who would have had her shut up

but for the direct interposition of Mrs. Mervyn, who, when she did come forward in village matters, had a way of gaining her point, to the delight and admiration of her husband, who was proud of her, despite his perversity. Shanno could make herself very disagreeable, having strong likes and dislikes; but a word from any member of the Mervyn family prevailed with her at once. She was, perhaps, more under the control of Llewellen Mervyn than of anyone else, and would follow him about like a dog.

All this the corporal detailed to Major Faithfull, with the addition that his special favourite, Llewellen, had gone to college against his will, having his heart set on being a soldier.

It need scarcely be said that the Major was late for dinner, which was half over when he reached Manorsant, and he was celebrated for punctuality, and prided himself upon it.

This was the more annoying to Mrs. Philipps Wynne, because she had summoned her sister, Marcia Pryse Pryse, to meet him ; assuring her that he was quite a *beau idéal* of an officer, and would make an excellent husband for any young lady. It would be difficult to say how she had become acquainted with this fact, since she had not known him long.

He made his apologies to Mr. Wynne in so straightforward a manner that the old gentleman readily received his excuses, saying, with a laugh,

“Dr. Johnson was, I believe, of opinion that it was better to make one uncomfortable than many, so we have not waited. Besides, you are on duty, exploring, and trying to frighten off Rebecca. I have not been at ease for months ; but there is a feeling of protection in having you and your men at hand.”

“If our adversary do not out-manceuvre us,” replied Major Faithfull.

He was able to reinstate himself in Mrs. Wynne's good graces, by paying all proper attention both to her and her sister. Marcia was small, bright, and somewhat of a flirt, so she was an attractive addition to Manorsant in the eyes of the officers who frequented that hospitable mansion. She was quick at repartee, and dauntless of speech; and was, perhaps, more generally a favourite with men than women. There was, as it is expressed, "no harm in her;" though she not unfrequently planted a thorn where she only meant to prick with the slight touch of sarcasm. *Piquante* was the word that exactly expressed her, and which Major Faithfull used when he spoke of her. Although young she had been already much in society, and was a good deal admired. Few men could resist the glance of her very bright eyes, or the jest and laughter that were ever ready on her lips; and she was quite prepared to play

off these fires on Major Faithfull and his military friends.

Despite his tardy appearance, a place had been kept for him at her side, and they were soon engaged in conversation. Ready wits not only jump, but soon learn the light nothings that make up the amusement of society ; and they had both ready wits. Not that Major Faithfull was merely a man of society ; but he had the gift of adaptability, which, say what one will of men of the world, is one of the boons which intercourse with one's fellows bestows. He had, moreover, a keen perception of character, and read Marcia's quickly. It was, indeed, transparent, her vanity and self-satisfaction being as apparent as her prettiness and repartee. Anything natural was pleasant to Major Faithfull, who had encountered much that was affected in his intercourse with women ; therefore he was at once taken with the young lady whom

Mrs. Wynne had kindly provided for him. It is rare that the deeply-laid plans of our mothers and sisters are so successful.

Their very lively first acquaintance was interrupted by the entrance of the children, who ran up to Aunt Marcia with evident delight. She turned her bright face and ready jests upon them just as easily as she had levied them at the Major.

"Here you are, you little rebels; I hope you are improved. I have been asking grandpapa all about you. He says you are mending slowly. Is that the new governess, Teddy? How do you like her? Confide in your affectionate aunt."

"She makes us say our prayers twice," answered Teddy, with unwonted solemnity.

"I don't mind, but Virginie says it is *trop, trop*," put in Maggie.

"*Trop!*" repeated the vivacious Marcia. "That is what the naughty little boy asked for when his *bonne* said you must not eat *trop*. What does Pussy say?"

"I 'ove her," whispered soft little Pussy, nestling up to her aunt.

"Who makes you say your prayers twice?" asked Major Faithfull, drawing Teddy towards him.

"Our governess, Miss Mervyn, and I'm not going to do it no more," replied the boy, sturdily.

"Then you will never make a good soldier," said Major Faithfull, gravely, just as Marcia was beginning to laugh. "Do you know that obedience is our first lesson, and that I have to obey my governess."

"Your governess? Who is she?" asked Teddy, open-mouthed.

"Her most gracious Majesty the Queen; and, besides, I have to obey a higher power still, my King."

"There ain't no king now," argued Teddy, boldly.

"I mean the King of Kings, my boy. And to be a good soldier, either at home or on the battle-field, we must never cease

praying to Him, not twice, but all day long, if we need to meet the enemy bravely."

Major Faithfull spoke in a low, quiet voice, and this little interlude would have passed unnoticed by anyone but Marcia, the children, and himself, but for one of the guests whom he had not seen. This was Mr. Edwardes, who was sitting on the other side of Marcia, and had been listening to what passed.

"Allow me to shake hands with you, sir. Permit me the honour of your acquaintance. We are fellow-soldiers, though in different regiments," said he, half rising, and, in his enthusiasm, thrusting his hand out.

"Take care, Mr. Edwardes. You don't know how you may endanger my false hair," cried Marcia, glad to break in upon the Major's solemnity.

But he received this right "hand of fellowship" behind that young lady's back, saying to Mr. Edwardes, "I think I have

met you before, and am glad to meet you again;" then, turning to Marcia, added with a smile, "I trust we have disarranged neither the curls nor the equanimity, but I think we may sometimes impress children without appearing to do so; and I never let flippancy on sacred subjects pass unrebuked if I can help it."

Marcia's lip curled slightly, but she checked the "flippancy" that rose to her throat, and gave Teddy the consolation of some fruit. But Teddy was staunch and sturdy, despite his contumaciousness, and stuck to Major Faithfull for the remainder of the dessert, as children not unfrequently will to those who can subdue them quietly.

After they and their aunt had disappeared, Mr. Edwardes entered into conversation with Major Faithfull, and thanked him for giving one parishioner a lesson, and so strengthening the hands of another.

"Does not that other live somewhere by

the lake?" asked the Major. "I think I met her there this afternoon."

"Then I am not surprised you were late for dinner," put in Mr. Wynne, who overheard. "She is really a very sensible and modest young lady. I consider the children fortunate in securing her. They are certainly less riotous than they were. Her father is a very good sort of man, only obstinate; and her mother is a most superior woman—person of family, they say, only she chooses to conceal her parentage, why, nobody can tell; for Mervyn, though a rough diamond, is of old family."

"There is always more romance among the mountains than elsewhere," replied the Major, glad to turn the conversation from himself, for he saw that a brother officer was smiling at Mr. Wynne's allusion to his having been detained by female charms.

It did turn, in effect, naturally into other channels, and Rose and Silly Shanno were, apparently, forgotten.

Rose was, meanwhile, undergoing a probation at home. Alfred Johnnes had reappeared on the scene, and had come to Llynhafod on pretence of business with Mr. Mervyn. He was invited to remain to supper, for Mrs. Mervyn was scrupulously polite to her husband's friends when she came in contact with them. He had no reason to suppose that Rose had mentioned his proposal to her parents, so he was at ease with them, though not entirely so with her. He was, however, so bold and off-hand that she was scarcely conscious of any change in his manner. The topic of the evening was Rebecca, and he had much to say concerning the destruction of the salmon-weir. He put a great many home questions to Rose, but she managed to evade them. Her father was, however, less reticent, and spoke with acrimony of the treatment he had received.

“When Rebecca burnt my rick, who am rather a well-wisher than otherwise, I

took Wynne Manorsant's side against her," he said.

"You are supposed to have done that when you swore to my voice," laughed Johnnes. "It was hard upon an innocent fellow like me to be hauled up for a joke."

"Practical jokes are dangerous, Mr. Johnnes," remarked Mrs. Mervyn.

"So I find, and I shall avoid them in future," he returned, glancing at Rose. "But I fear Rebecca's amusements are practical realities. I have heard of one or two threats fulfilled, and anonymous letters followed by consequences. I take precious good care not to annoy her. I believe she is our Lady of the Llyn disguised, and can do what she likes. Have you met the White Lady yet, Miss Mervyn?"

"No, but I hope to see her on Midsummer Eve," replied Rose, looking at her mother. "It is then she appears."

Mr. Mervyn and Edwyna laughed heartily. They were far too practical for the fairy kingdom; but Alfred Johnnes, wishing to appear well in Rose's eyes, declared his belief in the Lady of the Llyn.

"My mother vows she saw her years ago, when returning from a party at this house," he said. "It was before you became its tenant, Mr. Mervyn. She was riding on a pillion behind my father, and they reached the lake just in time to see the spirit disappear. My father disputed the fact, but she maintained it with true feminine resolution."

Rose was at once interested, and, with a clearness that would have charmed a modern psychologist, began to discourse with Alfred concerning the nearness of the spiritual to the temporal kingdom. But she soon found that he was merely agreeing with her because he wished to please her.

“It is useless to try to convince those who will not be convinced,” she said. “But there must be some truth in our beautiful legends.”

“How can the Lady of the Llyn live in a bottomless lake, Rose? She must be very tired to have nothing to rest upon,” said Edwyna, who was very provoking.

“We know so little of the spiritual world——” began Rose.

“The less the better!” interrupted her father. “The corporal asked me the other day if I thought he would have a wooden leg in another world, and I couldn’t tell him; and Jim asked me if I thought Dolly would go to heaven, because he didn’t know what he should do there without Dolly, and I was nonplussed. And old Tom Jones, when he lost his wife, wanted me to take her best clothes to Cardigan that I might get him her photograph. ‘How is that to be managed?’ said I. ‘I am not knowing, sure; but the gentleman

as is taking the likeness will know,' said he."

Rose and Edwyna laughed, but Mrs. Mervyn maintained a rigid gravity that irritated her husband, who liked his stories to be appreciated, whether they were witty or not.

Alfred Johnnes listened, agreed with everyone, and looked at Rose, who felt uncomfortable beneath his bold and persistent glance. She was assured that this visit was not without its meaning, and she remembered Rebecca's advice with sudden fear.

When he was about to leave, he managed to get near her and to say, in a low voice,

"I shall hope soon to convince you that what you hinted at when we met last has no foundation."

"It is a matter of indifference to me," she replied, with decision.

"We shall see," he added, as he pressed

her hand, and then turned to wish her mother good night, who had overheard the short colloquy.

CHAPTER XIII.

MIDSUMMER EVE.

NEVER had Llyngwyn looked more beautiful than on the Midsummer Eve so long expected by Rose. It wanted half an hour of midnight when she glided along the shore of the lake towards the point at which the White Lady was fabled to appear. She was followed at a distance by a tall, slight, youthful male figure. This was her brother Llewellen, without whose protection she was forbidden by her mother to seek the spirit. The night was cloudless, and the beams of a crescent moon fell between the spirit-seekers and the woods, so that their shadows lay softly

on the silvery water, and moved as they moved. All was still. Scarcely did the rushes and sedges breathe a sigh. The melancholy night-owl and corn-crake were silent, and the grasshoppers' chirp hushed.

It was as if the heart of Nature, like Rose's heart, had ceased to beat, in expectation of a being from some other world than theirs. Still, though no breeze whispered, the delicious perfume of the new-mown hay was in the atmosphere, and mingled with the delicate scent of the sleeping wild-roses. It was a night for all that was spiritual, whether elves, or fairies, or true love, and it fell on the sensitive, romantic Rose like a heavenly dream. She reached the spot for which she made, and stood a few moments with her finger on her lip, till her brother glided quietly past her. Speech would have been fatal—the spell broken by a word. He went to a little distance, where he could watch Rose, and see that no evil befell her, while she re-

mained standing beneath the moon, with the rocky mountain at her back, the placid lake in front, and slumbering nature around. As she believed religiously in the spirit of the lake, she expected to see her rowing her golden boat with her golden oar, at "midnight's witching hour." She could not tell how the minutes sped, therefore knew not when she should pass that ghostly barrier betwixt day and night, unless perchance the clock in the old church tower far below should pierce the solemn, moonlit stillness. She might have been herself the spirit for which she watched, she looked so white and ethereal in her quietude; for a breath, a movement, she thought, might disperse her dream of years; and so she remained immovable, her large clear eyes fixed upon the lake.

Although of a nervous temperament, Rose had no fear of the poetically supernatural, so when the faint echo of the first of the twelve strokes from the old clock in

the black tower reached her quickened hearing, she felt only heightened expectation. Her soul seemed to have gone out to meet the spirit, and she looked like a pale ghost in the moonlight.

Just as the mountains repeated in a whisper the last toll for departed day, there suddenly fell upon the lake a rosy hue such as the White Rose had sometimes seen at dawn.

“She is coming!” said her heart, bounding, and then standing still.

Her imagination would have been highly wrought enough for any belief, and she almost fancied she saw a white ethereal something rise out of the now fleckered waters. Her eyes were strained, her hand extended, her breathing hushed, so that neither by sound nor motion she should disturb the Midsummer Eve visit of the water nymph. As if by magic, her excited attention was turned. She saw, actually,

a white figure, but not in the centre of the lake, as she expected. It seemed to rise from among the rushes at the side, and come quickly towards her. It was now that her pulses stood still, and terror seized her. The reality was not what fancy had pictured. She would have fled before the thing she had sought, but her powers of motion failed. She had not strength to call for her brother, who had indeed disappeared; and all she was capable of was to stand, cold and motionless, by the lake.

The figure was soon at her side. She felt rather than saw that it was not the transparent spirit she expected, but one of grosser kind. Still it looked ghostly in the moonlight, and was all in white. It whispered something in her ear.

“I come to warn you again,” were the words it spoke. “If you refuse *that offer* your father will suffer.”

"You are Rebecca!" she cried, with an effort at courage of which she had not thought herself capable.

"I am the Lady of the Lake in Rebecca's dress," whispered the white figure. "You come to seek me. I appear. Take my warning. Marry him who asked you last, or beware the consequences."

Although Rose was romantic and superstitious, she was also sensible and brave. She summoned back her courage, and looked at the figure, expecting to encounter the face or mask she had seen before. But a white veil hung between her and it.

"See yonder! For your father's sake heed what I say," it continued, pointing to Penllyn.

Rose glanced up at the summit of the mountain, and there she saw Rebecca's midnight signal, the flaming bonfire. This it was that had cast the red hues of dawn on the lake. While she was looking towards it, she again felt the touch of Rebecca's

hand. She receded from it, and uttered a loud cry of "Llewellen!" It was answered, but not by her brother.

Another figure appeared striding towards her. In a moment Rebecca vanished: how or where Rose knew not, but she was left alone to meet this new apparition. But this was no white lady, for it had on a glittering helmet and nodding plumes, upon which the moon cast a silver sheen.

"Where is Rebecca?" it asked.

"Gone. Vanished up Penllyn," replied Rose, re-assured, for she discovered that Major Faithfull stood by her side.

"Do not be afraid. I am no spirit, but a living friend," he said, taking Rose's arm gently, as if to support her, for she trembled now more perceptibly than did the reeds and rushes. "My troop is in ambush down yonder, watching for Rebecca, and, as you intimated your intention of being also a watcher, I have had my eye

on you ever since you came to the lake. You have not seen the spirit?"

"I scarcely know what I have seen or heard. I have been very foolish, and subjected myself to some strange delusion. The figure said it was the White Lady disguised as Rebecca."

"And you believed it?" laughed Major Faithfull; and his cheerful natural tones dispelled her fear. "It is more probably the Orpheus who suffered for her sake."

"I do not know. I believe there is much that we cannot understand," she replied. "How can Rebecca be in so many places at once?"

"There is the problem we have to solve. Let me take you home. I must not delay."

"Thank you, my brother is yonder watching me. I wonder he did not come when I called. We were neither of us to speak for fear of frightening away the White Lady; but I promised mother to

call for him if I was afraid. Will you call Llewellen, for I cannot?"

"I think it would be useless," replied the Major. "If he is a tall, slight young man, who was watching round the point of that rock, my men have got hold of him. We took him for a Rebeccaite."

"Oh, Major Faithfull!" interrupted Rose, in alarm. "My mother will never forgive me. He came to take care of me, and he is only a young collegian, just come home for a holiday."

"If so, he is quite safe; but he is to pioneer us up the mountain to where we are assured the rioters are. I will see that no harm happen to him. Now, as I think you are the only Lady of the Lake likely to appear to-night, for even on Midsummer Eve she would not care to meet a sceptic such as I am, you had better go home. But look! You might be almost rising from the waters."

Rose glanced upon the lake, and there,

where the red glare had not fallen, were the clearly-defined figures of herself and her companion, reflected in two shadows which yet appeared as one. That joint reflection replaced the white spirit in her mind, and when she looked up at Major Faithfull, and perceived that he was gazing earnestly upon her, she became suddenly aware of the doubtful circumstances of her present position. She knew nothing of this, her deliverer, yet she believed in him, as she did in the spirit, of whom she knew still less. But what must he think of her, who thus allowed herself to be so placed at such an hour. Still she looked again from him to the lake, and ever afterwards, when she visited that spot, two dark shades arose before her memory instead of the one her imagination had previously dwelt upon.

“Good night, and thank you for saving me from that—that—” she said, hastily, with a shudder.

“That monster!” replied Major Faithful, laughing. “That ‘spirit, or goblin damned,’ more dangerous far than your White Lady. I will see you safe home, as you may not be secure from his—or her—or its clutches. Which is it?”

“I cannot face my mother without Llewellen,” said Rose, timidly.

“I will answer to her for him; but I have no time to lose. He is quite safe with my men.”

He impelled her forwards with gentle firmness, and, once turned homewards, her steps were so swift he could scarcely keep up with them.

“She gangs like a ghaist,” he murmured, as her slight figure preceded him beneath the silver moon.

He hastened after her, but could not overtake her.

Mrs. Mervyn was standing in her garden awaiting her, and watching the fire on

Penllyn. Rose reached her while her protector was at the garden-gate.

“Mother, this gentleman—it is Major Faithfull; he has saved me from—from Rebecca. Llewellen is safe, but not here,” she said, breathlessly.

Mrs. Mervyn thought strange spirits were indeed abroad on Midsummer Eve, when the helmeted, booted, belted, and spurred dragoon accosted her instead of Llewellen.

“I have brought you back your daughter, and detained your son,” he said, after a glance at the mother of her whom he had so opportunely rescued. “It is a late hour for one so young and fair to be abroad alone.”

“It is; but it is the fulfilment of a promise of more than ten years’ standing, and I hope it will convince her of the unreality of her fancies,” replied Mrs. Mervyn, calmly. “I do not understand what

has become of my son. He went with her to the lake."

"He is leading my men the shortest route to yonder beacon. My horse is waiting for me to follow, my adjutant having gone on. No harm shall happen to him. What a moonlit panorama lies before us! What a peaceful home you have! I no longer wonder at your daughter's romance and belief in the unseen."

Major Faithfull glanced from Mrs. Mervyn to Rose. He could but be surprised at meeting such women in such a scene. The voice and manner of the mother impressed him at once; the daughter interested him.

"I do not understand about my son," persisted Mrs. Mervyn, "though I would return your kindness to my daughter by such hospitality as this house and the hour——"

"Let her give me a flower in remem-

branch of Midsummer Eve," interrupted the Major. "There must be white roses on the bushes as well as by the lake. I assure you your son is safe, and shall be with you in a few hours. May I have my guerdon before I go?"

"The first bud has just opened on the tree by the porch, Rose. You may gather it," said Mrs. Mervyn, pointing to the exact spot where she knew the flower had bloomed, but speaking gravely.

Rose plucked and presented the rose-bud, her deep grey eyes gleaming with a strange emotion as the receiver took it from her fingers and placed it in his scarlet coat.

"It is only a flower, but it is the first to bloom," she said, simply. "I am very grateful to you."

"Henceforth the white rose shall be my emblem," he replied, bending over her; and in another moment he was gone.

She stood gazing after the retreating

figure until her mother motioned her into the house.

“In every sense a soldier, Rose,” said Mrs. Mervyn. “Brave and gallant. Here to-day, there to-morrow. Ready to compliment a village maiden to-night, prepared to say pretty nothings to a town belle in the morning. I know them well, and the hearts they play with. He has done you a kind service, but I hope you may never meet him again.”

“Oh, mother!” exclaimed Rose. “I have never seen anyone so kind and courteous.”

“What has he done with Llewellen? I was mad, and you weakly superstitious, to think of this fool’s errand. But it is the first and last time. You had better go to bed.”

Rose perceived from her mother’s cold manner that she was annoyed, but no more passed between them. Silence was always Mrs. Mervyn’s refuge, when her feelings

were disturbed, and her daughter knew that any attempt at explanation only increased the reticence. So she kissed her mother, and retired to dream over the strange events of Midsummer Eve.

CHAPTER XIV.

LLEWELLEN MERVYN'S DECISION.

"TIRED nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," had rendered Mr. Mervyn and Edwyna unconscious of the events of Midsummer Eve, though they had retired to rest full of amusement at Rose's resolution to encounter the lake spirit. They met her at breakfast, eager to hear the result of her "manifestations," which was, however, a word not so used in their day, spiritualism not having been then developed into a science.

"Where is Llewellen?" was Edwyna's first inquiry.

The answer involved a detail of Rose's

encounter with Rebecca and Major Faithfull, as well as that of her brother's capture as a Rebeccaite. Mr. Mervyn only laughed heartily, but, as Llewellen was Edwyna's idol, she made a great outcry when she heard what had happened to him.

"And he going with the soldiers against his own countrymen!" she exclaimed. "Leading those big men with swords to the very place where the patriots are stationed. Rose, I am ashamed of both of you!"

"Indeed, I am sorry," pleaded Rose, who always shrank beneath the younger sister's reproaches. "He is quite safe, however, for Major Faithfull promised to take care of him."

"Ha, ha! A big fellow like Llewellen doesn't want to be taken care of," laughed Mr. Mervyn. "He is pretty sure to fall on his feet; though there seems a fate that leads him amongst the soldiers. As

to Rebecca, you may be sure she was 'cute enough to warn her followers in time, and the dragoons will have beat just such a retreat as we specials did. Rose, were you not frightened?"

"Yes, father, I think I should have fainted but for Major Faithfull," answered Rose, timidly.

"You will not watch through another Midsummer Eve? What did Rebecca in the guise of the White Lady say to you? He seems to have a fancy for you. It was well he did not carry you off again," rejoined Mervyn, gravely, for him.

"I wish that grand gentleman had rescued me," cried Edwyna, thus enabling Rose to evade a reply to her father's question. "He is the handsomest man I ever saw in all my life. And he spoke to me too, father. But I wish Llewellen would come home."

So did the anxious mother, who had left the breakfast-table to watch for him. To

Rose's relief, she returned with him, and with an expression of satisfaction on her face but seldom seen there.

Llewellen Mervyn was a youth of whom any parent might be proud. He had his father's good looks, together with his mother's manners and bearing, and having no special thorn in the flesh, or skeleton in the cupboard to trouble him, was as happy in mind as he was handsome in person. Rose would sometimes look at him with a sort of envy, because he managed to say and do just what both parents liked; while she, in her overwrought susceptibility, fancied she pleased neither.

"He loves everyone, and everyone loves him," she would say; "whereas I—well, I am afraid my heart is hard, and I love but few."

This was in some sort true. Llewellen's sunshiny nature brought cheerfulness with it, while Rose seemed born of the moonlight.

"My dear Edwynna, you will choke me," were his first words, as he entered, his arm round his mother's waist.

They were called forth by Edwynna's jumping upon his neck, and hanging there, in spite of his best efforts to release himself. But he freed himself at last, and advanced to kiss Rose.

"I am so sorry that I failed in my duty, dear," he said. "I kept my eyes upon you, and my ears on the stretch for ten minutes at least, and I must confess that I thought we were both very foolish. Then I remembered your orders, and went round the rocky point where I had promised to remain, when a sentinel cried 'Halt!' and took me prisoner, fancying that I was a Rebeccaite."

"And you are one, Llewellen, of course," interrupted Edwynna.

"Not exactly. But I soon found myself in the midst of a lot of cavalry and infantry, secreted near the road to Penllyn.

They had been in the wood for some hours, expecting Rebecca, having been positively informed that she was to be at her pranks hereabouts last night. An officer came forward, and when I said who and what I was, and what had brought me out so late, told me that he had seen you by the lake, and would take care of you, but that I must be their guide up Penllyn."

"That was Major Faithfull, and I shall never like him again!" cried Edwyn.

"Pray do not interrupt your brother," said Mrs. Mervyn.

"You went after the enemy by the light of their own fire," put in Mr. Mervyn. "I'll be bound you didn't catch her."

"We certainly did not, father. But I think we should, or rather the soldiers would, but for Rose and the White Lady. Rebecca must have seen the Major, and ascended the mountain by the back, and so warned the rioters; for when we reached the top there was not a soul to be seen.

Still the huge bonfire alight on the cairn, a few women's garments, and several picks and scythes dropped by the way, proved that the Rebeccaites had been there. So did a diabolical laugh somewhere or other, which so enraged the soldiers that they would have gone after it had they not been restrained. What a glorious thing military discipline is!"

"I'll warrant me you have had another bite of the old serpent, my boy," said Mr. Mervyn. "What has become of the college cap?"

"I dropped it on the mountain, father; but I will look for it by-and-by. If it was so exciting just to scale a hill one has known all one's life, what must it be to meet the enemy face to face in battle?"

"Excitement ending in desolate homes and broken hearts," said Mrs. Mervyn, quietly. "But have you been with the military ever since?"

"Yes, mother. We saw the day dawn

on Penllyn. A glorious sight! Then we reconnoitred; then examined the way by which the rioters escaped, and finally came back upon the turnpike-road."

"We!" ejaculated Mr. Mervyn. "That sounds grand. And I daresay *we* trampled down my young wheat, and did lots of mischief with *our* hoofs and heels."

"I am afraid we did, father," replied Llewellen, so apologetically that Mr. Mervyn exploded in one of his heartiest laughs, and Edwynna jumped upon his knees, and put her hand before his mouth.

"Let those laugh who win, sir. *We* have lost," she said, with a glance at her brother, whose handsome face was flushed.

"We shall all lose if we idle in this way," remarked Mr. Mervyn. "What are your military engagements to-day?" he added, addressing his son rather sarcastically.

"I have promised to help Jim, father. I met him as I came home, and he seemed

to know all about last night's work, how, I cannot imagine. But he said, 'Rebecca's too many for 'em. I wish there was an army of women. Their tongues would be cutting sharper than the swords of the soldiers.' "

Mrs. Mervyn would not allow her son to leave the house until he had breakfasted and rested. He had a child-like obedience to his parents, and a transparent truthfulness of character which were as charming as they were rare. Happily he had never been thrown amongst people who tempted him to disobedience, though his desire to please others frequently went counter to his own pleasure. He would have been a farmer for his father's sake, a clergyman for his mother's, a soldier for his own. And yet he was not wanting in decision, as his conversation with his mother will prove. She had taken up her work and seated herself by his side while he breakfasted, content to feel that he was near her; but he

seemed restless, and in no mood for eating.

“Dear mother, I am afraid I was wrong to go to college. It is money thrown away,” he began, abruptly, dropping his knife and fork, and fixing his eyes on Mrs. Mervyn.

“Why so?” she inquired, quietly. “I understand you have done well so far, and Mr. Edwardes thinks you may gain a scholarship, which would reconcile your father to your having given up farming.”

“Mother, I feel more and more that I am not called to the ministry. It cannot be right to take orders in the Church when your whole mind is set in a contrary direction. Mr. Edwardes impressed that upon us. Edgar’s heart is in his work; mine is not. If it were any other profession, or trade even, I could labour in it against my inclination; but my conscience will not let me fight under one banner while my heart is panting for service under another.”

“And what can you say to your father?”

You would not enlist? You could not bring sorrow upon us both? You would not disgrace my—our—your family?"

"No, mother; I promise you not to enlist, great as is the temptation at this moment. I will work with father on the farm, and be what, I suppose, nature intended me for."

"A clodhopper! I—I mean—such a one as Alfred Johnnes, or others with whom you are acquainted."

Mrs. Mervyn pulled herself up on that first word, which had slipped out unadvisedly, and hesitated.

"I should be as my ancestors, honest tillers of the soil, though I would rather fight for my country. It is hard that a fellow cannot get a commission without money and interest. Major Faithfull said as much when he saw how enthusiastic I was."

"Interest! We might have that, perhaps," murmured Mrs. Mervyn, while her

son bent over her, hoping for more; but she only added, "I wish I had not given you these notions."

"Instinct and Homer, not you, mother," said Llewellen, with the attractive smile that won all hearts to him, and unchained his mother's; "and, I may add, King David and the pictures in the old Bible. Long before I made the acquaintance of the Iliad and Odyssey, I revered the priests and envied the warriors. Mother, will you be greatly disappointed if I leave college? I shall be always with you then, dear."

"Of course I shall be disappointed. As a clergyman I had hoped——"

"Hoped what, dear mother?"

"Nothing—nothing. But with your looks and education you would have got on in the Church, and might——"

Mrs. Mervyn paused, as she always did when she seemed to her children on the eve of some disclosure of interest. Her head bent low over her work, and a tear

dropped on it. Her son's arms were instantly round her, and his warm heart smote him for giving her pain. But she recovered in a moment, for she rarely let her feelings conquer her habitual self-restraint.

"Do not be hasty, Llewellen," she said, laying her hand in his. "There will be time to resolve between the present and the next college term. You may change your mind."

"Never, mother. If I wavered before, last night steadied me. It must be 'Cæsar or nothing.' But I will not tell father unless you wish it. There is Mr. Edwardes, we will consult him."

Llewellen hurried out into the porch to meet the vicar. Their greeting was very warm, for much affection existed between master and pupil. He was soon made acquainted with the state of Llewellen's mind by Mrs. Mervyn herself, and at once took her son's side. He had strong con-

victions on the subject, and had often expressed them in Llewellen's hearing.

"But you must be fully persuaded in your own mind," he said. "You must pray for guidance. You must search the Scriptures. You must not hastily relinquish the sword of the spirit for that of the flesh, remembering 'that they who take the sword shall perish by the sword.'"

"I have no prospect of that, sir," said Llewellen. "I wish I had, it would be the glory of my life."

Mr. Edwardes glanced at Mrs. Mervyn, who shook her head sadly, and uttered the word "Inherited," which she alone understood. But both felt that it would be useless and wrong to combat the young man's feelings as they then were, though they believed that, if the military were to depart, they might flow again into their old more settled course. But Llewellen's taste for the army seemed, as he said, to have been born with him, and he had studied military

tactics when he ought to have been asleep, or engaged in very different work. The discussion was continued until Mr. Mervyn returned to ask Llewellen to show him how and where the affray of the previous night had happened, and Llewellen, nothing loth, accompanied him up Penllyn.

CHAPTER XV.

EGAIN'S PRAYER.

NO one guessed what Rose suffered during that day. She was haunted by a vision of the figure she had seen on the previous evening and the words it had spoken, and she vainly tried to summon common sense to combat with superstition, and to convince her, if possible, that the thing was human. She taugt as in a dream ; and, but for Teddy, would have had the weight of an indifferently-spent day on her tender conscience when she examined herself at night. That young gentleman had bottled up what Major Faithfull had said to him at dessert, not

wishing to give Rose an advantage over him, but it effervesced at last. Something he was reading called for the words, "That's what Major Faithfull said," and Rose was aroused at once. An inquiry on her part elicited the little episode, and the commanding figure of her soldier defender eclipsed for the moment the creeping form that vanished when he appeared.

The children were growing fond of her. Her extreme gentleness won them, while her firmness kept them in check. When the afternoon lessons were done, they asked to be allowed to accompany her to the lodge, and she could not refuse them, much as she longed to be alone. They summoned Virginie obstreperously, and she, also against her will, was compelled to acquiesce, for quiet must be obtained at all cost, on Mr. Wynne's account.

But the lodge was reached, and Rose had bidden the children a hasty good-bye, when, within a hundred yards of the gates,

she encountered Major Faithfull. Virginia and the children were looking after her down the road, and saw the meeting.

"*Ma foi! encore un autre!*" muttered Virginia, as she peered through the iron bars.

There was not much to see. The Major raised his hat, and stopped to speak to Rose. She also paused in her rapid walk.

"You are as swift as the spirit you sought last night, Miss Mervyn," he said. "Have you recovered from your interview with Rebecca? How I wish I could have caught and ducked him!"

"Do you really think it was a—a person?" asked Rose.

"Just as much as your brother was a *person*, whom I had met before," laughed the Major. "Where is he? I should like to make a soldier of him. Why, he knew all the military terms of the old encampment as pat as if he had been fighting amongst the ancient Britons, and was pre-

pared to fight with the moderns. Why has he not a commission?"

"He would fain be a soldier, but mother wishes him to be a clergyman," sighed Rose. "And he has no means of entering the Army except by enlisting, which he would never do. Besides, my father wants him at home, and he would not disobey him."

"Ask him to call upon me; perhaps I could advise him," said Major Faithfull.

"He never goes to Manorsant, and—my mother may not like it. She is distressed at his love for soldiering," returned Rose.

"We can no more turn a natural bent than we can a river. He is every inch a soldier," said Major Faithfull, who, though neither a gallant nor a courtier, could not avoid the look of admiration that accompanied his words, and which caused Rose's clear eyes to avert themselves.

Yet she lingered a moment, to say, with a grace which was perfectly natural to her,

that she wished to thank him for his kindness the preceding night. In her imagination he was a knight-errant, ready to redress all wrongs, and as much removed from the ordinary race of beings as was the White Lady herself.

“I wish I might rescue you again, if only to receive such thanks,” he said, as she was about to leave him.

She fixed her eyes gravely upon him, as if to ascertain whether he meant what he said, smiled when she seemed to read that he was sincere, wished him good evening, and pursued her way. He stood to watch her, with his hand over his eyes, for the sun poured his rays right above him.

“‘A spirit, yet a woman, too,’” he murmured. “Who on earth can her mother have been?”

His question was answered by some one shouting, “Major Faithfull! Major Faithfull!” and he turned to see Teddy, who, in

spite of watchful Virginie, had passed the gates and was rushing towards him.

"That's my governess, and I said my prayers and my geography and grammar all right to-day," continued the boy, seizing the Major's offered hand.

"Then you will make a fine soldier," returned the Major, as the little girls also came forward.

He was fond of children, and the trio surrounded him as he walked up the drive, while Virginie remained behind to gossip with Mrs. Matthias, the lodge-keeper, who was standing under the rustic porch of her ornamental dwelling.

"Have you seen how the handsome major meets Mademoiselle Mairvyn? Is it that they have the rendezvous here by your lodge?" she began.

"I am not seeing them here before, but I was see them meet in the park, and he is take off his hat beautiful," replied Mrs.

Matthias, whose English was even more imperfect than Virginie's.

"Hein! She is much admire, Mees Mairvyn?"

"I am not knowing, but they are saying that Johnnes Glynglås do want to marry her. There's lucky she 'ould be! He haves a house of his own and lots o' money. And he 'ould be lucky too, for she do be quite a lady."

"Meester Jeannes, he admire de ladies, is it not?"

"You are knowing that so well as me, Miss Virginney. I was seeing you courting him, on my deed."

Mrs. Matthias winked knowingly as she uttered these words, and Virginie, giving her a malicious look, turned and hurried after the children and Major Faithfull.

Rose, meanwhile, was hasting towards the turnpike, thinking of her many "visions," of all of which this stalwart major was the most real. Her life had

hitherto been so retired that the outer world had been a dream, and her own romantic, strange inner life the reality. Now she was suddenly launched upon the more restless waters that surrounded her quiet home, and new pictures filled her imagination. Even Manorsant had begun a novel existence for her; but the events of the few last weeks had bewildered her; and the only figure that stood out clearly against the mottled background of her mind was that of Major Faithfull. There were truth, decision, and grandeur in his face and manner, and she dwelt on them with interest. She had that confidence in him which led her to hope that he would circumvent Rebecca, and free her father from the threat she had received on his account.

As usual, she went into the gate-house to see Egain. She found her less well than she had been; for, in spite of her calmness and resolution, she was beginning

to tremble for her father and her home. To Rose, who was accustomed to see her cheerful and talkative, she appeared sad and silent, and, when questioned as to her health, the customary "much better" sounded unnaturally strained.

"You had better come and stay with us until these riots are over," said Rose, when a few preliminary sentences had passed, and she was seated by Egain's bedside; within the pictured screen. "You know mother has asked you, and you shall have the little room in which you so kindly nursed me all to yourself. You remember how good you were to us?"

Rose alluded to a time when she, her brother, and sister had been laid low with fever, and when Egain had volunteered to help Mrs. Mervyn to nurse them. It was years ago, and long before Egain's own illness; but none of the inmates of Llynhafod had ever forgotten it. Indeed, they

believed that, under God, Rose owed her life to Egain's tender care.

She was then a bright, handsome girl, who had been carefully brought up by her parents, and who had been much sought after by her equals, and even by her superiors. She was about sixteen when she and her parents came to Llansant turnpike, and the fact that her father had fought at Waterloo, and that she had been born in Brussels while the battle was going on, lent additional interest to her fine character. What with her cleverness and good looks, and Madoc's stories of his soldiering days, it is no wonder that Llansant turnpike had been, and indeed still was, a favourite resort of the young folk of the neighbourhood.

"I could not leave father and mother while danger threatens them, dear Miss Rose," was Egain's reply to her friend's invitation. "Besides, no one will harm me.

The sick were Christ's care when on earth, and He still watches over us from His home above. But might I say a little word to you, dear Miss Rose?"

"A thousand, dear Egain," answered Rose, tenderly. "Why do you ask permission?"

But Egain's colour came and went, and her breath grew short as she strove to say this "little word." At last she breathed it low, her hand over her eyes.

"They say Mr. Alfred Johnnes wants to marry you. Is it true?"

"Yes, Egain."

"You will not accept him?"

"I think not; I hope not—but——"

"You do not love him? Dear child, say you do not love him."

"No, Egain, but—— You must not tell. My father wishes me to marry him."

The thin hand was removed from before Egain's soft, dark eyes, and the eyes were fixed on Rose.

“Put your trust in God,” she said. “But not with a half faith. Let us pray together for perfect trust, perfect trust, so that we may fear no evil by night or by day.”

She drew the screen closer to her bed, and clasped her hands, while Rose knelt down. She then offered up a prayer to the Most High for the gift of a perfect and childlike faith in Him and His dear Son, and in their guidance and protection. Then she entreated that anyone who had worked, or might work them ill, should repent and receive pardon from Heaven for his offences, and “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us,” she added, in conclusion, and Rose said, “Amen.”

“Now you can go forth and do and say what you know to be right,” she said, solemnly, as Rose bent over her. “I feel that he is waiting for you. I know what he will say, and how he will say it; but you

are too pure, too good, too innocent, and young for such as he. Resist him, dear child, and oh! do not marry him."

Tears filled the dark brown eyes, and, as Rose took her departure, they were uplifted in supplication.

CHAPTER XVI.

ROSE TEMPTED AGAIN.

AS Egain suspected, Alfred Johnnes was lying in wait for Rose, but not, as usual, on the high road. He had discovered, to his annoyance, that she avoided him, so he had taken the short cut to the lake, and was in hiding amongst some trees in the meadows. She was congratulating herself on having escaped from him while actually following in his footsteps.

He, however, contrived to meet her as if by accident, turned with her, and began to question her jocularly concerning her midnight watch of the previous evening, to which it may be remembered allusion was made when he took supper at Llynhafod.

She replied gravely that it had ended in disappointment, as she had not seen the White Lady. She made no mention either of Rebecca or Major Faithfull. She saw that he laughed somewhat unpleasantly, and the expression of his countenance almost alarmed her, for the handsome bold face could look fierce and sinister on occasion. He put several pertinent questions which made her fancy he must have heard of Llewellen's capture by the soldiers; but she evaded them.

Before they reached the lake he began the dreaded subject, by asking her what she had meant on a previous occasion by her allusion to Egain. The question seemed to allay her perturbation, for she remembered her late interview with Egain, and the poor girl's advice and prayer. She answered him quietly and with spirit.

"Did you not once promise to marry Egain, and have you not deceived her?" she asked.

“Egain! Madoc the corporal’s daughter. A gate-keeper and a common soldier! That is a strange question to ask of one who has, at least, some pretensions to being a gentleman,” he replied, with an assumption of nonchalance.

“Egain is handsome, and in herself almost a lady, and you were always with her when you were both young,” added Rose, with a sort of grave severity.

“Young! I hope I am young still. I am only—well—three or four years turned of thirty. Do you suppose, Miss Mervyn, that I ever thought of marrying Egain?”

“I do not know; but, if you made her believe you would marry her, it was much the same thing. As my mother says, men have much to answer for when they trifle with girls, and we shall all have to give an account.”

“Ha! ha! The White Rose turned preacher! Pray continue your sermon. I

will listen as long as it lasts, be it for an hour, which is more than I can do to your friend and admirer the vicar, who sends me to sleep. But did Egain tell you I ever promised to marry her?"

"No; but I am equally well assured that you did, and this is why I refused to listen to you the other day. Egain's mind was as ill at ease as her body for a long time, though now she has found peace, not the peace which man could give her, but a divine peace that springs from forgiving and being forgiven."

Rose fixed her penetrating grey eyes on Alfred Johnnes, and his fell for a moment, but only for a moment. The next he said, with a jesting laugh—

"I am really very glad that she should be so amiable. She used, I remember, to have a will and temper of her own. But this can have nothing to do with you or me. You have been imposed on by some designing person, for nothing beyond a boy

and girl intercourse ever passed between the corporal's girl and me."

"The corporal's girl!" repeated Rose, indignantly. "Egain is Egain! She was nearly as old as I am when she came to Llansant, and you are four years her senior. I was a child in those days, and yet I remember hearing of her beauty, and your love for her."

"Love! How can you profane the word?" he exclaimed, so vehemently that the woods and hills seemed to echo it, and Rose hurried on until they reached the lake. "You shall not escape me again until you give me some better answer," he added, detaining her.

She did not like the expression of his face or his imperious manner, and Rebecca's threat returned to her mind. But this was succeeded by a recollection of Egain, and she gained courage for decision. She said she was going to see Silly Shanno at the Abbey, and that she could not be delayed.

Again he walked by her side, renewing his offer, and his protestations concerning Egain. She allowed him to pour out what she considered a great deal of impertinent nonsense, until she nearly reached the ruin, then she paused and said, as politely and calmly as she could,

“Thank you, Mr. Johnnes, for what you are so good as to say to me, but I hope you will never repeat it, as I cannot accept your offer. I could never be your wife.”

“Your father wishes it. He has given his consent,” he cried. “I will never give you up. Beware how you refuse me, for I have much in my power. If this is Egain’s doing, she shall suffer for it. Everybody shall suffer.”

He was beside himself, and did not know what he was saying, or, indeed, what he was doing, for he seized Rose’s arm almost roughly, and spoke at the top of his voice. His loud tones reached Silly

Shanno, who appeared at her door in the ruin, and, perceiving the disputants, for such they really had become, advanced to meet them. She was much adorned, having covered her hat with a profusion of wild flowers.

“Alfred Johnnes, give me a shilling. Where is Egain? Did you drown her that time I saw you by the lake? Ha! ha! It was there. Look you! just there by the rose-tree! You threw her into the lake. Poor Egain! She is crossed in love, like Silly Shanno. You will not cast the White Rose into the lake! Come here, White Rose. Believe him not. Give me a shilling, Alfred Johnnes, and I promise not to tell.”

Rose glanced at Johnnes, whose face grew red with suppressed passion. He had released her, and moved to a little distance, so that she stood midway between him and Shanno.

“Mad fool! What does she mean?” he

exclaimed. "I will indict her for a nuisance, and have her put into an asylum."

"No, no!" shrieked Shanno, running to Rose for protection, and falling at her feet, for the word "Asylum" sufficed to throw her into a paroxysm of terror.

"Don't be afraid, Shanno. Father will protect you," said Rose, laying her hand on the poor woman's shoulder, and looking at Johnnes reproachfully.

"Father will soon require some one to protect him, if his daughter does not take care," muttered Johnnes, savagely. "Good day, Miss Mervyn. If you change your mind, as you may, be good enough to let me know. And you, Silly Shanno, who are more cunning than mad, take care how you behave in future."

He took off his hat ironically to the tall girl and the crouched woman she was protecting, and was soon lost to sight among the ferns, grasses, and wild roses that covered the sward beneath the trees.

Shanno rose slowly to look after him, then, with her finger on her lips, beckoned Rose into her strange dwelling. She was no sooner there, however, than she forgot Alfred Johnnes, and all Rose's endeavours to discover the meaning of her enigmatical words concerning him and Egain were fruitless.

It was always so. A gleam of memory would shine for a moment, and then totally disappear.

While this was passing on one side of the lake, Mr. Mervyn had been watching on the other. He saw that Rose did not make use of the coracle, and that she was not alone. He partly recognized her companion, and hoped that a better understanding had been reached between them, and that they might come to Llynhafod an engaged pair. Seeing them separate, however, on the appearance of Silly Shanno, he walked to meet Rose by the lake. She soon joined him, for she left Shanno

when she saw that she was tranquilized.

He inquired at once if Alfred Johnnes had not been with her, and she replied in the affirmative. Perceiving that she was much agitated, he drew her arm within his, and asked the reason. She told him briefly of the renewed proposal, and her refusal. He looked angry and vexed, but did not reproach her, because he saw that she had been in some way terrified.

“Would it not be better to make a respectable match than continue this ridiculous governessing at Manorsant?” he asked. “You see I have nothing but my blessing to leave any of you, which was pretty nearly all that my father left me, and what little came to me besides, I have sunk in farming, which doesn’t pay unless you are bred and born a farmer, which I was not. And now Llewellen turns restive about his profession, your mother tells me. She never rested until he went to college, and after all he won’t be a parson.

Serve her right, I say. Whatever you do, Rose, never marry for love. Sure to turn out badly."

"What else should one marry for, father?" asked Rose.

"For a home, a settlement, ease, and, I suppose, a companion; though I won't insist upon the latter. Johnnes has all the necessary qualifications, and I advise you to change your mind before it is too late, or he may change his."

Rose fixed her eyes on her father, as she answered him slowly, thoughtfully, deferentially.

"Are you quite sure, dear father, that I should have *ease*? In the first place, he is not a religious man; in the second, he has been faithless to other girls; in the third he is not a good son. Would such a man make a good husband?"

"Rose, you are too old for your years," returned Mervyn, avoiding the searching, almost painful look of his daughter. "One

can't have everything in this world, you know. I haven't, at any rate."

"But you have a true and pious wife, dear father; one who could never stoop to a mean or dishonourable action. If I ever marry, I should wish to say as much for my husband."

"Then I hope he will be in your own rank of life, and not be as reserved and shut up as an oyster. Johnnes and you are equals, and, whatever else he may be, he is outspoken and honest," said Mr. Mervyn, his temper rising.

Rose knew too well what this temper was to pursue the subject farther. She longed to say that she was grieved to annoy him, but, like her mother, she often took refuge in silence when speech would have been less aggravating. She did so now, and it angered her father. He thought she was obstinate when she was only perplexed, so he let her arm drop, and strode away from her with the words,

“All women are either mules or magpies. You either stand stark, or else you chatter one to death.”

“Indeed, father——” began Rose ; but he had disappeared while the words were on her lips.

She could not help smiling at his ideas of her sex in spite of her annoyance, and wondering why men and women were so antagonistic.

As she entered the garden, she met Jim, who had even a less good opinion of the sex than her father. He had a broken trowel in his hand.

“Ha, Jim, what will mother say ? Her favourite trowel,” she remarked.

“Husht you, miss *fach!* I’ll just put it back. Mistress will be better content if she thinks she’s broken it herself,” was Jim’s ready reply, as he put the iron into a flower-bed, and laid the handle near it.

“But, Jim, it will be a story——”

“Never you mind, miss, if it do satisfy

mistress. I am not liking to trouble her. Master, he is teasing enough for one 'ooman. But look you, Miss Rose, he will be getting into trouble with Rebecca if he is talking against her. He do speak out like a big calf as you are taking from the cow and can't satisfy if you are pouring a pail of milk down her throat."

"And very cruel it is, Jim, to separate mother and child," exclaimed Rose.

"He, he! There's for you, Miss Rose! But you are not understanding! Master, he do set his face against Rebecca now because she carry you off. Marry you Johnnes Glynglås, and maybe he'll be helping master. Take you him quick, while he's willing. Say 'Yes' to-day, for fear he say 'No' to-morrow. Bad for all if you won't have him."

"Really, Jim, I wish you would mind your own affairs. What can you know either of Rebecca or Mr. Johnnes?" said Rose, ever more and more distressed at this advice.

Jim gave an inexpressible wink, pointed with his thumb over the right shoulder, and walked deliberately out of the garden. This was caused by the appearance of Mrs. Mervyn beneath the porch.

Perplexed Rose joined her, and lost no time in telling her what had passed between Alfred Johnnes and herself, as well as what her father had said to her. She had the comfort of being assured that her mother was as much opposed to the match as ever, though she did not say so, lest she should appear to be advising Rose against her father's wishes. She, poor girl, was so bewildered and excited that she complained of a throbbing headache, which caused her mother to persuade her to go at once to bed ; and so she avoided further discussion of a subject that was not only disagreeable, but had become almost terrific, for that night at least.

CHAPTER XVII.

THREATENING LETTERS.

EVENTS thickened rapidly in the parish of Llansant, and it was as though the quiet hamlet had suddenly become the centre of the world ; at least, so it seemed to its inhabitants. Rebecca, with the soldiers in her wake, was here, there, and everywhere ; and the insurrection appeared to gather strength with opposition. When the rioters saw that they could pull down the obnoxious gates successfully, they began to think they could redress other grievances, and even attacked the Carmarthen workhouse, and would probably have destroyed it but for the military, who were

said to have ridden thirty miles to defend it. We all know what strikes, riots, and the like are, and how a little success will drive infatuated people mad. They think that, when they have made what they consider a lucky hit, they can have everything their own way ; but they are mistaken.

The bonfire blazed again nightly on Penllyn, and anonymous letters increased. Poor Mr. Wynne literally shook in his shoes, despite the protecting officers, and others sympathized with him. He had taken to consult with Mervyn, because he, too, received threatening letters ; and the twain, who were certainly not born sons of Mars, talked over the best means of humouring their enemies. The result was that Rebecca, who knew everything, made a joke of them.

One morning there appeared on the barn-door at Llynhafod a rough sketch—and it was very rough indeed—of two donkeys with their heads close together.

Beneath was written, "Handsome Jack and the squire." Mervyn's vanity was piqued, and his family were furious. Even his quiet wife's ire was kindled. But when, on the eve of the same day, a paper was found in the hall, containing uncomfortable menaces and dastardly inuendoes, his temper was roused to its utmost. It ran thus:—

"Hold your tongue, or look to your barns and ricks. Make your daughter Rose marry, or beware Rebecca. She suffers no countrywoman who encourages her enemies, the redcoats; and the White Rose is a traitor. So is your son. Send him to the North Pole out of temptation, or Rebecca will see to his future education."

While Mervyn was fuming over this letter, Rose brought home the news that the corporal had also been threatened again. He had been frequently ordered to take no toll, but had consistently done

so, nevertheless. The previous evening a party of doubtful horsemen had commanded him to unlock his gate and let them through, but he had declined until they had paid. They were strangers to him, and had left him with threats of Rebecca. He had since found a paper counselling him to keep his gate open, or to take the consequences; but the corporal was not to be put down.

“Did such a set of jackasses think they were going to bray down a man who had fought at Waterloo?” he said, as he told the tale to everyone that passed by.

“You see how it is, Rose,” cried Mervyn, irritably, as he stood in the parlour-window, the paper in his hand. “You and Llewellen are too grand for your own people, and can be content with nothing less than English officers. Rebecca knows it, and will pay us off for it. She knows everything. I begin to think she is super-human. Look there.”

He pointed out to Rose the mysterious clause which concerned her. Terror and indignation combined to make her speechless for the moment ; but her brother spoke for her.

“ Surely you could not pay attention to such wretched nonsense as that, father. Why, you are supposed to wink at all the riots, and to be rather a friend than enemy.”

“ So I was till they carried off Rose, so I am still at heart, or should be, but for such threats as these, and that—that abominable caricature.”

“ The whole thing seems too low for a moment’s consideration,” remarked Mrs. Mervyn from her work-table. “ Show that it is beneath your contempt, and they will cease to annoy us. A brave front repels the bully.”

“ But they are not bullies, they are true-born Welshmen ; and if the magistrates had only done away with some of the gates

there would have been no riots at all, Jim says so!" broke in Edwyna, and turned her father's wrath into one of his heartiest laughs.

"Nevertheless, I think we had better be prepared against our valiant countrymen," said Llewellen, who was as brave as his mother, and resolute in action. "Let us drive to town to-morrow, and give information. We need not make our business public, but the magistrates and military should know that both we and old Madoc have been threatened. Will you come, father? The cowards turn upon Rose and me on account of that unlucky Midsummer Eve adventure, and we must show that we are not afraid of them."

"It will not do to irritate them," replied Mr. Mervyn, who was really terrified at what might happen, and who glanced reproachfully at poor Rose.

Her own reproaches were quite sufficient; she felt as if the meshes of the net that

had in some strange way encircled her were drawing closer and tighter.

While the consultation still continued, Mr. Edwardes and his nephew came in, and were admitted to a share in it. Rose left the room, followed by the anxious glances of Edgar, who, admiring her at a distance, saw that something troubled her.

He was a student at heart as well as by profession ; but he yet found time to think that creation had no fairer book to read from than the White Rose.

Before she had been many minutes in her room, Edwyna joined her. She put her arms about her in her impulsive way, and kissed her, saying,

“Don't mind the letter, you darling ! It was only just to frighten father into holding his tongue. Jim says so ; and Jim knows everything. What do you think ? I saw that grand Major Faithfull to-day, all in uniform. He was coming from an inspection, so Llewellen said, but he was

on foot. You know I have been introduced to him, so I went up to him, and asked him how he was. And he shook hands with me, and inquired for you and mother. I said you were quite well, and made him just such a curtsey as mother makes when she meets Mrs. Wynne, and can't help speaking to her. He laughed, and held out his hand again, and then I laughed, and we shook hands as if we were never going to stop. I feel quite grand when he shakes hands with me."

"My dear Edwyna, how could you?" asked Rose, roused from her despondency.

"How could I? Very well indeed, thank you, and liked it. I wish he would come and see us. I did ask him, and I said I was sure mother and you would be very glad to see him."

"You ought not to have done anything of the kind, Edwyna. What will he think of you?"

"That I am what mother says, an un-

ladylike, half-educated dairymaid. But I don't care. Mally and I brought the butter capitally to-day, and she said, 'There's beauty you are, miss. There's a wife you'll make.' Now, if Alfred Johnnes had waited for me, Rose, there is no knowing what might have happened. But he looks like thunder, so I can guess what his message meant."

Rose's brow was clouded again, and Edwyna, with an earnest gravity unusual to her, entreated for her confidence. She gave it in part, but Edwyna was not satisfied; she wanted all or none, and all Rose dared not give.

Meanwhile the conversation below stairs resulted in the resolution to defy the Rebeccaites. That is to say, the vicar, Mrs. Mervyn, and Llewellyn prevailed on Mr. Mervyn to follow his son's advice, and lay the matter before the authorities. Mr. Edwardes thought that, as one rick had already been destroyed at Llynhafod, the

threats looked ominous ; and he, like his old pupil, had a longing to bring to light those who had maligned Rose.

Accordingly, much against his will, Mr. Mervyn drove his son to the town the following afternoon. They got nothing but doubtful promises for their pains ; for the county magistrates were in terror for their own lives and properties, having, for the most part, received threats themselves. Llewellyn spoke up bravely for discipline and resistance, and asked if there were no means of making examples of a few to save the many, of taking up suspected persons, and so running the mysterious Rebecca to ground. But those to whom he spoke only shook their heads, and told him to appeal to the soldiers. But they were off after Rebecca, nobody knew where. It was easy for Mervyn to enforce secrecy, since people were afraid to speak out, their very thoughts being anticipated by the enemy. He chuckled over their

ill-success, his son chafed, but they got nothing for their pains.

They had a visit or two to make after they had transacted, or non-transacted, their business, so that it was late when they drove homewards. Mr. Mervyn took the opportunity afforded by the obscurity and the *tête-à-tête* to speak to his son concerning his prospects. Being conscious of a hot temper and small patience, he had not done so before, but had been content to vent his disapprobation on his wife.

“So, Llewellyn, after all the fuss your mother has made about school and college, I hear you have struck work. What may be your plans for the future?” he began.

“I have made none, father, beyond turning farmer and helping you,” was the reply.

“Which means becoming a labourer at a shilling a day and perquisites; a fag-got or so from me; wash for your pig, and skim milk, from your mother; and not

even this if Rebecca fulfil her threats.”

“I am very sorry, father, and I know your reproaches are just. I thought I could have taken holy orders, but my conscience will not let me. I think I could have stuck to any other profession even against the grain ; but heart and soul must be in the clerical, and mine are not. I thought of emigrating, but I could not bear to leave you and mother.”

“No capital, my boy. Can't emigrate without money; and a half-made parson would be failure. I suppose you would have been content to leave us for a soldier's life? Ha! ha! I have you there, my lad.”

Mr. Mervyn poked his whip-handle into his son's side, whose conscience smote him again, for he knew that he would gladly go to the Antipodes as a soldier, leaving home and parents willingly.

“I wish to do my duty to God and you, father,” he said, with a sigh, “but I do not

see my way. I believe it will be made clear. Only yesterday Major Faithfull asked me if I had no interest, and volunteered to help to get me a commission if I had anyone to back him."

"Better ask your mother," returned Mervyn, drily. "I have no interest in high places, and am neither silver-tongued nor golden-mannered enough to use it if I had. But I know that farming don't pay, and one or two more bad harvests will ruin me."

He spoke more seriously than was his wont, and spoke the literal truth. The last three autumns had been wet, and the harvests bad. He had found it difficult to make two ends meet ever since he had rented Llynhafod; for he was inclined to speculation in new modes of agriculture, which were failures in the arid mountainous district he tenanted; at least, he failed to make them pay, from want of capital and practical knowledge.

“It is all your mother’s fault,” he continued, after a pause. “If she had let me apprentice you to a good business, and had brought up Rose to understand household work, you would now be earning your livelihood, and Rose would be content to make a respectable match. But her confounded pride and unfortunate connections——” he paused again.

Just as Llewellen was about to defend his mother, all further conversation was stopped by the appearance of a figure at Dolly’s head. Resistance on the part of that much-indulged beast was vain; for no sooner did she begin to plunge and kick than more figures surrounded her and the dog-cart.

“Rebecca again!” muttered Mervyn.

“Yes, and she wants your horse and cart,” replied one of the Rebeccaites. “You may as well get out quietly. We are a hundred to two.”

Mervyn began to lash out with his whip,

but in another minute it was snatched from him, and he and his son found themselves planted on their feet upon the high-road.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REBECCA AT LLANSANT TURNPIKE.

THE Rebeccaites generally made their work short and sharp. They had not been long at Llansant Gate, but they had been expeditious. They had reached it on the side that Mervyn was approaching, and we must go back to the period of their arrival.

Madoc, his wife, and daughter, were asleep when they were aroused by the blowing of horns and other hideous noises. The corporal got out of bed and looked through his window. He knew at once that his time was come. Rebecca was without in great force.

"Give up your keys, Madoc, corporal," cried several voices.

"Pay your toll," he replied, and withdrew.

Instantly his tiny look-out window was smashed, and a black face presented itself. Owing to the depth of the stone window frame, however, it could discover nothing within.

"You had better give up the keys quietly," said Rebecca, whose habit it was to unlock the gates and take them off their hinges, in token of possession.

"I am a sentinel on duty. You may have my life, but not my keys," returned sturdy Madoc.

A curse on his obstinacy followed, then silence. Letty and Egain were aroused, and the former entreated her husband to yield, while the latter offered up a prayer.

"You a soldier's wife!" said the corporal, contemptuously, stumping about, and dressing himself.

He managed to place the keys in a hole which he had contrived in the wall, and which was unknown to the women; then he went to Egain.

“You are not afraid, my sweety?” he said.

“No, father; we are in God’s hands,” replied Egain.

He kissed her, and called her his brave soldier’s daughter, and then bade Letty dress herself, and prepared Egain for the worst. They wrapped the helpless girl in the warm flannel dressing-gown that Mrs. Mervyn and Rose had made for her, and sat down upon her bed behind the screen.

What seemed the worst soon began. Their door was attacked with sledge-hammers, and beaten in. Crash went panel after panel, until an entrance was effected, and Madoc, peeping out, saw a flaring touch through the aperture.

“Give us the keys, you old mule,” shouted Rebecca.

"Come and take 'em," returned the corporal, from behind Egain's screen.

They did not really want the keys, but they were resolved to conquer the obstinacy of their keeper, and to show him that he must obey Rebecca. Some one, who was apparently no stranger, pushed behind the screen.

"Have a care that you don't commit murder as well as riot," cried the corporal.

"Egain's here."

"Hiding, are you, under her bed-clothes?" said the intruder.

"I'd scorn to put on women's garments," answered the corporal, walking forth boldly into the middle of the room.

"The keys! The keys!" shouted a dozen voices, and the small house was filled with Rebeccaites, in every phase of female attire.

But they failed to get the keys. They searched Madoc by torchlight, then they got hold of a candle, and invaded Egain's

small domain. Both she and her mother declared they knew nothing of the keys.

“A soldier don’t let his women fight for him,” cried the corporal. “Do your worst on me, but let them alone. Why, even the French at Waterloo ’ould a scorned to fight in women’s clothes.”

This taunt was unfortunate, for it exasperated the rioters, already irritated by Madoc’s obstinacy.

“We’ll teach you better manners; and Letty, too, who’s worse than you,” said one, and thereupon two of them laid hold of him, and two of Letty, and dragged them out of the house, in spite of counter orders from the leader.

It was at this moment, or soon afterwards, that Mr. Mervyn’s dog-cart was seized, and its owner and his son summarily ejected from it.

We must return to them.

“We are not far from Llansant gate, father,” said Llewellen, as soon as he had

recovered from his surprise at Rebecca's summary proceedings. "I daresay they are pulling it down."

"Come and see what they are after, and what they are going to do with my dog-cart," returned Mervyn, furiously.

They hurried on towards the gate, and reached it just in time to see something lifted into the dog-cart, Dolly's head turned, and her driven off at a furious pace. There was a moon somewhere behind a flock of clouds, and there were many torches, so that they might easily both see and be seen. Llewellen proposed that they should go round by the back of the gate-house, and try to discover what was happening to the corporal and his wife and daughter. This led them to the river's brink.

Here was work worse even than the destruction of the salmon-weir. The rioters were dragging Madoc and Letty to the river, amid suppressed jests and

laughter. They heeded neither the corporal's entreaties that they would at least spare Letty, nor her terrified shrieks. The corporal's neat little garden separated Mervyn and his son from the actors in this wicked drama. It was surrounded by a thick hedge, and terminated in the precipitous bank of the river, so that it was difficult to get to them, even setting aside the danger. Sounds as of the hacking of wood were audible, and the smoke from a fire somewhere rose on the air, and partially obscured the gate-house. But poor Letty's cries surmounted all other sounds. They were, however, suddenly arrested by a plunge into the river, which extinguished for ever Mervyn's last spark of sympathy with the rioters. Law-breaking, like Sabbath-breaking, has often small beginnings, but huge endings. It was so here. The fretting against a slight toll was culminating in deeds of violence and even crime. It was no wonder that the

moon had hidden her face in sorrow before abject cowards who thus wreaked their mean vengeance upon an aged couple, whose only offence was that they did their duty to their employers.

"You can swim; I must get through the hedge. We must rescue them at all risks," said Mervyn.

He forced his way through the thorny barrier on one side, to a little gate on the other; strode down the steep bank to the river's edge, knocked over two Rebeccaites who had hold of Madoc, and managed to seize him by the arm just as his persecutors were saying,

"There's another souse for refusing to unlock your door and gate, you pig-headed old sinner, and to teach you better against next time. You won't resist Rebecca again."

"Yes, I will," said the breathless corporal. "Cowards! Villains! You'll be hanged for this!"

"Another dip!" cried his tormentors.

But they took it themselves, for Mervyn had struck out with a will, and they both tumbled into the water.

"Take care of your petticoats, ladies," he said, as he dragged the half-drowned corporal along the edge of the river until they reached the rocky point where he had himself sheltered on the occasion of his first appearance as a special constable.

"If I had only known as much then as now, you brutes!" he muttered; but his colloquy was cut short by the corporal.

"Oh! thank God, it's you!" he said. "Look after Letty—Egain—never mind me."

He was too exhausted to add more.

"Llewellen is looking after them. Keep quiet till the cut-throat rascals are gone," returned Mervyn, seating him carefully on the bank.

Llewellen had, in effect, seen after the women; that is to say, when his father

went through the hedge to aid Madoc, he waded through the water to help Letty. Thanks to the rocky sides and bed of the river, her tormentors were not aware of his approach, and he succeeded in rescuing her, just as they were about to give her another dip. Himself half under water, he put his arms round her waist, and carried her off triumphantly, while her cowardly persecutors remained at the river's brink, bewildered at her rescue. Finding that she was insensible, if not actually dead, he was at a loss what to do with her. If he carried her back to her house, he felt that they would both be liable to capture by the rioters, and the consequences might be fatal. The village seemed the only resource, so he bore her, as best he could, beneath the high bank, until he could, with something like safety, get upon the main road. He succeeded in this, and being active and strong, he managed to reach the slumbering hamlet

with his dripping burden. All was silent save the noisy river, that would almost have seemed to be making protest against what had just happened.

After a moment's consideration, he determined to arouse Pal the Shop, who was a chum of Letty's. Placing his still insensible burden against the door, he knocked at her bed-room window, and was soon rewarded by the sight of something white protruding therefrom, and the words,

"Name o' goodness, what's the matter this time o' night?"

"It is Llewellen Mervyn. Come down quietly and open the door, Pal," answered our knight-errant.

Pal obeyed, and Llewellen instantly carried Letty into her kitchen, without "by your leave," and laid her on the hearth by the never-extinct ball fire. He interrupted Pal's exclamations by a brief account of what had passed, and was still passing, and bade her see to Letty and arouse

her neighbours, while he returned to look after Egain.

“Then they’ll be drowning you!” said Pal, kneeling down and pouring some spirit, which she had taken from her cupboard, down Letty’s throat. “Put you on my old cloak and cap, and they’ll be thinking you one of themselves.”

At this juncture a neighbour came in, who had been aroused by Llewellen’s awakening of Pal, and at the same moment Letty revived, and asked for her husband and child. Pal assured her that they were coming directly, and began to strip off her wet clothes, assisted by the neighbour. As Llewellen was about to depart, Pal again advised him to disguise himself, and pointed to her garments hanging behind the door. He took down her old red cloak.

“Put you the hood over your head, and they’ll not be knowing you,” she said.

The advice was good, and he followed it. As he passed through the hamlet he

knocked at every door with a cry of "Rebecca at Llansant gate," feeling pretty sure that many of the male inhabitants were already there. Then he hastened back to the scene of action. Secreting himself behind a neighbouring tree, he saw that the insurgents were engaged in completing the destruction of the gate by means of saws and hatchets, while they had kindled a fire at the base of the posts. In terror for Egain, he resolved to enter the gate-house at all risks. He could scarcely do so unperceived by the insurgents, and he felt thankful for the disguise of Pal's cloak, short and insufficient as it was. He crept along by the hedge until he was close to them, then he mingled with them for a moment, and went boldly into the house. The door, as we know, was down, the furniture was in confusion, for he stumbled over articles of it, as he made his way to Egain's corner. All was dark and silent.

“Egain!” he whispered; but there was no answer.

He repeated her name in a louder key; still no response. He felt for the screen that he knew well, and found that it was overturned. He managed to reach the bed, and repeated his whispered call of “Egain! Egain! Where are you?” But neither voice nor breath was audible. In considerable terror he felt the bed foot. It seemed flat and unoccupied. He reached the pillows at last, but no head rested on them. The bed was evidently empty, and Egain was gone.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VAIN SEARCH FOR EGAIN.

WHEN Llewellen found that Egain had certainly been removed from her couch, he was at a loss what to do. Having witnessed the cruelty of the rioters to her parents, he feared they might have also done some wicked act by her; but if so, he was helpless either to discover or avenge it. He was, besides, anxious about his father and Madoc, not knowing the result of the attempt of the one to rescue the other. He peeped out of the corporal's little observatory; he looked forth from the dismantled doorway, but could hear and see nothing but the silent working and grotesque forms of the Rebecca-

ites, which were now dimly visible by the light of the torches, now obscured by the smoke from the smouldering gate-posts. He saw that there was a leader in white garments, mounted on a white horse, and that his followers were legion, and absurdly disguised. Indeed, but for the consequences of their strange deeds, the sight would have been laughable, and Llewellen, in his youth and high spirits, felt almost inclined to laugh at the awkward attempts of men to work in petticoats. He asked himself if it would be possible to get at the soldiers, but he had only lately heard they were in another direction; then he bethought himself of the possibility of dispersing the insurgents by a ruse. He again crept out unperceived, and went towards the village. He had the satisfaction of seeing what he expected, which was about a dozen women and boys, whom curiosity had led towards the gate, and who were in hiding at a distance.

“They have got hold of poor Egain, and I fear they must have drowned her,” he whispered. “Madoc is also gone. Whether it is right or wrong to pull down the gate, I leave you to decide, but it is diabolical to hurt innocent people. We must save them if we can. Will you all shout as loud as you can, and make a tramping with your feet, while I run in amongst them? Wait till you no longer hear my footsteps, and out-hollow their ram’s-horns.”

He was gone up the hill before they could answer. Drawing Pal’s cloak and hood close about him, he ran boldly into the midst of the Rebeccaites, and threaded in and out amongst them, whispering, “The soldiers! The soldiers!” As he did so, the distant tramp of the villagers was heard, and such a shout as the soldiers would certainly *not* have given. However, sudden questions passed from one to another of the rioters, of “Where?” “How?” “Who says so?” while Llewellen continued

to whisper, "The soldiers! Past the bridge. Upon you in a minute!" without betraying himself.

The surprise produced confusion, and the distant sounds fear of the consequences. Their work was nearly done, and, as they had scouts on all sides, they believed in the warning. At a signal from the figure on the white horse they gathered up their skirts and implements, and followed him through the now gateless turnpike. Llew-ellen crept into the gate-house, and watched them vanish into the darkness he knew not how or where.

"They must be demons," he thought; "yet I could almost swear to that white horse."

He went outside again, and all was quiet, save the continued tramp and noise of his friends below. The rioters had taken the contrary direction, so were not likely to be undeceived. Llew-ellen chuckled with de-

light at having out-manceuvred those who had taken in all the authorities. But he was soon serious again when he perceived that the fire kindled at the bottom of the gate-posts to char them and render them useless was so near the house as to endanger it. He picked up a torch that had been flung down in the *mêlée*, and was still burning, and carried it into the house in order to search for a bucket. He found one, and, glancing round the room, discovered that Egain was, too surely, not there. He halloed at the top of his voice for his allies, who were still shouting and tramping, though he knew very well that they were either too much interested in the destruction of Llansant Gate, or too cowardly to come forward. However, his voice was not without effect, for it reached his father and Madoc in their hiding-place, and was recognized.

“Stay here while I reconnoitre,” said

Mervyn to the corporal, and in a few moments he and his son were comparing notes.

“I will extinguish the fire, father, while you return and fetch Madoc,” said Llew-ellen.

He knew of poor Letty’s path to the river, and stumbled down it by the aid of his torch, filled his bucket, and returned to throw the water on the burning post nearest the house. A few more buckets-full, and the fire was extinguished, so the corporal’s small property was safe. But Madoc thought not of this. When he and Mervyn came back, his cry was,

“Egain! Egain! my child! My darling! What have they done to thee?”

He stood over her bed, then he sat down upon it, and, covering his face with his hands, burst into tears.

Mervyn lighted a candle and looked about him.

“I don’t think anyone would harm



Egain," he said, consolingly. "They have carried her off just to frighten you. They have stolen nothing; not even the old sword and the Waterloo medal."

At these words the corporal started up, and approached the mantelpiece. He took down the sword, and, drawing it, swore vengeance on all who had harmed his child. Then he also unhung the Waterloo medal, fastened it to his button-hole, and stood erect, crying out, "Attention! Round about, face. Double quick time!" and other such military commands. The poor fellow was, for the moment, beside himself, and his forlorn home was converted into barracks and parade, if not quite into the field of Waterloo.

Mervyn looked on, irresolute, his kind heart moved by his words and manner. At last he put his hand on his shoulder, and spoke to him.

"Change your clothes and come and look after Letty. Llewellen will see to Egain."

“I am on duty, and will not leave **my** post, either for wife or child—God help them!” was the reply he got. “I have kept the keys—I will maintain my position.”

He was standing motionless, like a sentinel, when Llewellen came in, and, with ready tact, turned his ideas; indeed, restored him to himself.

“Fresh orders have come from headquarters. This place is no longer tenable,” he said, unhesitatingly.

The corporal’s rigid limbs and fixed eyes relaxed.

“Ah, you rogue! you’re at your tricks again,” he exclaimed, when he recognized his favourite Llewellen. “What is it all?” he added, when memory, lost for the moment, returned.

He soon remembered what it was, but submitted to Llewellen’s gentle, yet firm influence. He took off his dripping clothes, and put on dry, because he was told that

he must be ready for Egain and Letty. Still he could not be persuaded to leave his post.

“I will demand toll as long as I have a drop of blood in my body; and I will have every soul that won't pay, up before the magistrates.”

“I wonder what the rascals wanted with my dog-cart?” asked Mervyn. “And Dolly!—what will Jim say?”

“What have they done with my Egain?” said the poor corporal. “And when will Letty come?”

As he spoke, the first beams of the early rising sun broke in. They were followed by many villagers, whose courage came with daylight, and who were ready to go right and left in search of Egain. Still there was not one who ventured to give a hint concerning Rebecca, though their curiosity was lively enough as regarded what her ladyship had left behind her.

“Touch you one of those things at your

peril!" exclaimed the corporal, looking at the wreck in the dawning.

The sun of a glorious July morning was less shy than his predecessor, the moon of the evening before. He gradually kindled into life and colour the objects so lately obscured. The foam of the river gleamed white, the dew-drops on myriads of leaves and grass-blades glistened, the meadows shone in green and gold, and the mountains, stripped of their dark night-dress, donned their robes of royal purple and red. The performers in the gigantic leafy orchestras began drowsily to tune their instruments, till, by degrees, a mighty chorus of various minstrelsy sounded, as if by magic, on all sides, and Nature awoke to greet the majesty of the Creator, as revealed in His divine work, the risen sun.

At such a moment the words of the poet were verified, "And nought but man is vile," for the work of the creature belied

the merciful intention of his Maker. There, in the holy beauty of the first blush of morn, lay the mutilated gate, the charred and blackened posts, the shattered door. And there also lay several soiled female garments, one or two pickaxes, and even a reaping-hook, left in the sudden panic. But, beyond all, there stood the corporal, ill-used, unjustly despoiled, and driven half mad by the disappearance of his child—and all for what? For that which would have scarcely been considered a wrong, but for the agitators, and which would probably have been righted by patience. It was then as it is now, “Woe unto them through whom offences come!”

The attention of the on-lookers was diverted from this scene of spoliation by the appearance of two figures toiling slowly up the hill. One was that of a tall woman, leaning upon another woman much shorter than herself. As they drew

near, they were discovered to be Letty and Pal. The corporal did not perceive them, but Llewellen ran off to meet them, and to help Letty. She was marvellously dressed in clothes too small and short for her, but she could not be prevailed upon to remain in the village, so Pal was accompanying her home. She was so weak that Llewellen's kindly support came opportunely. Again, he half carried the poor old woman, but not this time in the wretched plight of his previous effort, and at least dry. If there were a Rebeccaite among the gathering throng of peasants, he or she must have been touched by the meeting of the gate-keeper and his wife. At any rate, the details were sure to reach the rioters. Letty fell upon Madoc's neck, crying out,

“Egain! Have you found her? Did they drown her as they would have drowned us, but for Llewellen Mervyn, Llynhafod?”

Then they staggered together into the house, and looked upon their child's deserted bed, as if hoping that some good angel had restored her to it. But, alas! she was not there.

While they were weeping silently, Mervyn was urging the bystanders to go off at once and search for Egain. Llewellen was already by the river, dreading lest some torn shred of one of her garments, or even her corpse, should greet him; but, if evil had been done to her, the leaping waters told no tale. He was joined by Pal the Shop, who, now that Letty was alive again, became anxious about her property.

"What were you doing with my cloak?" she asked.

"It is safe in the gate-house. Where was your son Shonny to-night?" returned Llewellen, for Shonny usually slept at home.

"He was at Nan the Coom's Bidding, and slept away," said Pal, with ready lie;

for she and Shonny owned a horse and cart, and secretly desired the destruction of Llansant turnpike.

“I saw him in the morning with Johnnes Glynglâs,” rejoined Llewellen.

“He was doing a job of work for him first,” said Pal. “There’s fond Johnnes Glynglâs is of Miss Rose! Advise you her to have him. I am knowing something.”

“My sister knows her own affairs best,” replied Llewellen, with some of the maternal pride; but Pal was gone and did not hear him.

The bank of the river was soon dotted with women in scarlet cloaks, and boys, ostensibly looking for Egain; so Llewellen left the search to them, and returned to his father and Madoc, to consult as to what it would be advisable to do next.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT BECAME OF THE DOG-CART.

IT will now be necessary to relate what happened at Llyngwyn during the absence of its master.

Rose returned home at the usual hour, and she was accompanied by Mr. Edwardes and his nephew. She met them accidentally, but it seemed to her that there was some fatality in her so frequently falling in with the few unmarried men of her acquaintance. She certainly did not seek them, and, glad as she was at all times to see the vicar, she heartily wished he would keep away from her under her present circumstances. Yet how was he to know

of Rebecca's threats unless she told him? and delicacy forbade that.

Mrs. Mervyn, however, welcomed him and Edgar warmly, and Edwyna with unfeigned delight. They consented to remain to tea, and Edwyna's joyful sallies covered her sister's discomfiture. The conversation turned on Llewellen, as it always did when Mr. Edwardes visited Mrs. Mervyn; and Edgar joined in it more fluently than was his custom, for he was silent and studious, and, though possessed of sufficient talent, had not the gift of making the most of it, particularly in Rose's presence, whom he yet desired to please above all others.

"I wish Llewellen could get a commission," he said, heartily. "I don't think he ever took a book down from the shelves of the college library of his own free will that did not turn upon battles and sieges. He never tired of these subjects; but divinity was pain and grief to him."

“He ought to have read about agriculture, and how to rear cattle and till the ground,” put in Edwyna, decidedly.

“Your opinion is not asked,” said her mother.

“I should never speak at all, mother, if I waited till it was. Nobody ever consults me, but people confide in me all the same, which shows that I am deserving of consideration.”

Edwyna glanced at Edgar, who coloured. The fact was that he was in the habit of talking to her of her sister whenever they chanced to be alone; and as she was shrewd enough, and, at the same time, herself very fond of Edgar, she was, if not exactly jealous, at least suspicious. She had strong affections, and wished to be first in the hearts of those she loved, though she inwardly consented to be second to Rose. She was still but a child, although her decided opinions and extreme vivacity made her appear precocious.

“Major Faithfull seemed to think that Llewellen was a born soldier,” remarked Rose. “How hard it seems that nobody quite fills the position for which nature intended him.”

“I am sure you do not, Rose. Nature never meant you for a governess, nor mother for a farmer’s wife. Now I——”

“My dear Edwyna,” remonstrated Mrs. Mervyn, while Mr. Edwardes looked reproachfully at his favourite.

“Oh! but it is quite true, mother, and you know it, Mr. Edwardes,” argued Edwyna; “Edgar is the only one who has just what he likes. And I think it very dull to be a clergyman when you are young, though very proper when you are old, like you, Mr. Edwardes.”

“Quite true, in one sense, my dear,” said the vicar. “But, if we devote ourselves to God when young, we find his service easier than if we enter upon it when old.”

"I wish I was good!" sighed Edwyna.

After tea they all went out into the hay-field, and, while the youthful trio wandered about, Mrs. Mervyn and the vicar sat down under a tree, and continued their conversation concerning Llewellen. Rose had soon enough of Edgar's sentimentality and Edwyna's boisterous spirits, so she left them, and joined her soberer friends. By doing so she let loose Edgar's tongue, and silenced her mother's.

"Rose is not well, I think," began the one. "She looks anxious and absent. I wish she had never gone to Manorsant. She is too delicate and sensitive for that sort of thing. You see, Edwyna, the sensitive plant recoils at a touch, and Rose is a sensitive plant."

"So she is, Edgar. I quite agree with you. But just come and help me to the top of this load of hay. It is the last in the field. You can mount first, but don't let Jim see us, for we have just had a quarrel."

“You don’t think Rose is really ill?” pursued the pensive Edgar, following Edwyna towards the waggon.

“Not a bit of it; but I’ll tell you what I do think. If ever you are a clergyman, and Rose should be a member of your congregation, you will do what somebody I once heard of did, and begin, ‘Dearly beloved Rose!’”

Edgar’s blushing remonstrance was cut short by the sudden appearance of Jim, which caused Edwyna to scamper away and mount the waggon unperceived by him, and unaided by Edgar. Several of the children of the haymakers were already seated at the summit of the load, and she planted herself in the midst of them, waving her hand to Edgar and Jim, and a very pretty picture she made. So did the scene that surrounded her; for beyond the hayfield lay the lake, and beyond that the sun-tipped mountains,

"There's obstinate and wild she is," remarked Jim to Edgar. "I was telling her that missus 'ouldn't be liking her to be up in the waggon with the poor children, and says she, 'We're all human beans, Jim.' 'There ain't no such things,' said I, and she argured the point, till I said I 'ould be asking the vicar."

"But why should you think there are no such things as human beings, Jim?" said Edgar.

"Because there are no beans but broad beans and kidney beans. I am knowing English enough for that."

Edgar knew Jim too well to "argur the point" with him, so, hesitating a moment between Rose under the huge oak and Edwynna on the waggon, he decided in favour of the latter, because he felt a little pang of jealousy at seeing Rose's face turned in all serious earnestness towards his uncle.

She had joined Mr. Edwardes and her mother just as the latter had seemed to have come to some sort of resolution, for she heard her say, "I will write, but nothing will come of it." Rose felt inclined to say "To whom?" but she had neither the courage nor inquisitiveness.

When the vicar and his nephew had departed, Mrs. Mervyn made a great point of Rose's going at once to bed. She obeyed, as she always did, but with reluctance, as she wished to sit up for her father and brother. She was naturally very anxious concerning the result of their expedition, since she felt that it was made partly on her account. However, she perceived that her mother was determined, and she retired with Edwyna.

Mrs. Mervyn always sat up for her husband, in spite of his remonstrances. He was very popular amongst his friends, and although he never exceeded in the matter of inebriating drinks, he always did in

hours. She was not, therefore, surprised that twelve o'clock should strike and he and Llewellen not have returned. She was, besides, occupied at her desk; indeed, so engrossed as to forget time.

The letter she wrote must have been important, for not only did she sit thinking for a long time before she began it, but she meditated between each sentence, and even then she was so dissatisfied with her composition that she tore up sheet after sheet when she had filled them. She finished her letter, however, at last, and made a copy of it. During its progress she started at every sound, and placed her writing within her desk, as if fearful of being surprised while thus employed. She need, as we know, have had no such fear, since those she expected were occupied in a way she little imagined. Still, although herself singularly courageous, she was not without terror of the Rebeccaites; and when her letter was signed, directed,

cautiously sealed, and locked up in her desk, she began to be anxious concerning her husband and son.

Jim had informed her that his master had ordered him not to wait up for him, saying that he or Llewellen would put up Dolly; so she was really watching alone, so far as she knew.

But Rose was also a watcher. She lay awake wondering when the wheels of the dog-cart would break upon the stillness of night.

It must have been nearly one o'clock when both she and her mother fancied that they heard them at a distance. Their respective windows were open, and, while Mrs. Mervyn unclosed the door and went into the porch to listen, Rose crept out of bed, and went to her window to hearken also. Although the moon was hidden, the night was not absolutely dark, and a moving object could be distinguished.

There was no bonfire on Penllyn to illumine either hill or lake, and all Nature slept peacefully.

“Here they are! I hear wheels. I am so thankful,” ejaculated Rose, gazing towards the gate that opened on the short drive.

It was certainly the dog-cart, but, as it drove rapidly over the gravel and pulled up at the door, Rose was sure that it contained neither her father nor brother. In place of their tall dark figures was something white. She trembled, and restrained a cry with difficulty, for she felt sure it was Rebecca. She could distinguish neither face nor form; but the white garment was enough. The figure dismounted, and lifted what seemed a white sack from the vehicle, and disappeared within the porch. She heard her mother’s voice in decided remonstrance, which raised her courage and indignation, so that she hastened to

dress, that she might stand by her in this singular emergency. Hearing again the sound of wheels, she glanced out of the window, and saw Dolly quietly turn round and trot off alone in the direction of his stable.

Mrs. Mervyn, meanwhile, stood bewildered in the porch, protesting against the entrance of the invader. But Rebecca was not to be repulsed. She pushed roughly past the mistress of the house, carrying the burden she had taken from the dog-cart, and which was undistinguishable in the obscurity. Mrs. Mervyn had left her sitting-room door open, and the light from her candle apparently attracted the unwelcome visitor, who made direct for it through the hall. As this was really a man, though disguised, we must return to the masculine gender.

He was back in the hall before Mrs. Mervyn could follow him to her parlour, but he had left his burden behind. She

stood with her back to the doorway, and faced the intruder; being alone, she did not venture to close the door.

“Who are you who dare to force your way into this house?” she said, in her most commanding tones.

She was answered in Welsh; and, though the voice was disguised, she fancied she knew it.

“If you are a man you are a coward,” she added, as he laid his hand on her shoulder and passed out.

She followed him to the gate, and saw that he disappeared amongst the out-buildings at the back of the house, and not down the lane. She would have pursued him, but she remembered that he had left something behind him, and her imagination suggested combustibles. She ran back to the house, and was met in the hall by Rose.

“It was Rebecca. What did he bring in, mother?” asked Rose.

"Come with me and see," replied Mrs. Mervyn, relieved, despite her natural courage, by the presence of her daughter.

They went hand in hand into the sitting-room. There, on the couch, lay the burden Rebecca had brought. They each felt a sudden terror, for they perceived a white hand hanging at the side of the sofa. Rose shrank back with a cry, but her mother went forwards, for she knew that a fellow-creature lay there. No sooner was she by the side of the couch, however, than she, too, shrank back, and clasped her hands in terrified surprise.

"What is it, mother?" whispered Rose.

"It is—it is—it is Egain!" was the whispered reply.

"Egain!" repeated Rose, hurrying to the couch.

Yes, it was Egain; and, like her poor mother, she was insensible, if not dead.

"Call Jim. Send at once for Dr.

Griffiths," said Mrs. Mervyn, as soon as she could collect her senses.

Rose was already bending over Egain, to discover if she breathed, but, with customary obedience, she staggered out to the loft where Jim slept. She was too terrified to notice at the moment that he was up, and stabling Dolly, or to perceive that he threw something aside when he came out through the coach-house door; but she remembered it afterwards. She gave her mother's orders.

"I am not going to take Dolly out again for no Egain," he said. "It is three good miles to walk. Tell you mistress that she had better be keeping quiet, or she'll offend Rebecca. Egain will come to, and be all the better for her ride."

"But my father! and Llewellen! Surely you have not put up Dolly, and they not back?" said Rose.

"How was I to know? When one's

asleep one can't be asking how the little mare did come home. Call you Mally, and I'll be coming to the mistress 'rectly minute. There, now, miss *fach*; don't you be frightened. Egain has got a cat's lives. Go you in and I'll follow. And marry you Johnnes Glynglâs."

"Fetch the doctor,—see after my father and Llewellen,—go to the turnpike and ask what brought Egain here," ordered Rose, in a breath.

"I am not able to do three messages at once, Miss Rose; but I'll be looking after the master, as is my bounden duty, when Dolly's rubbed down and I have put on my coat."

"Why, you are dressed already, Jim. I thought you were in bed. And you have a black patch on your cheek, Jim! Jim, what have you been about?"

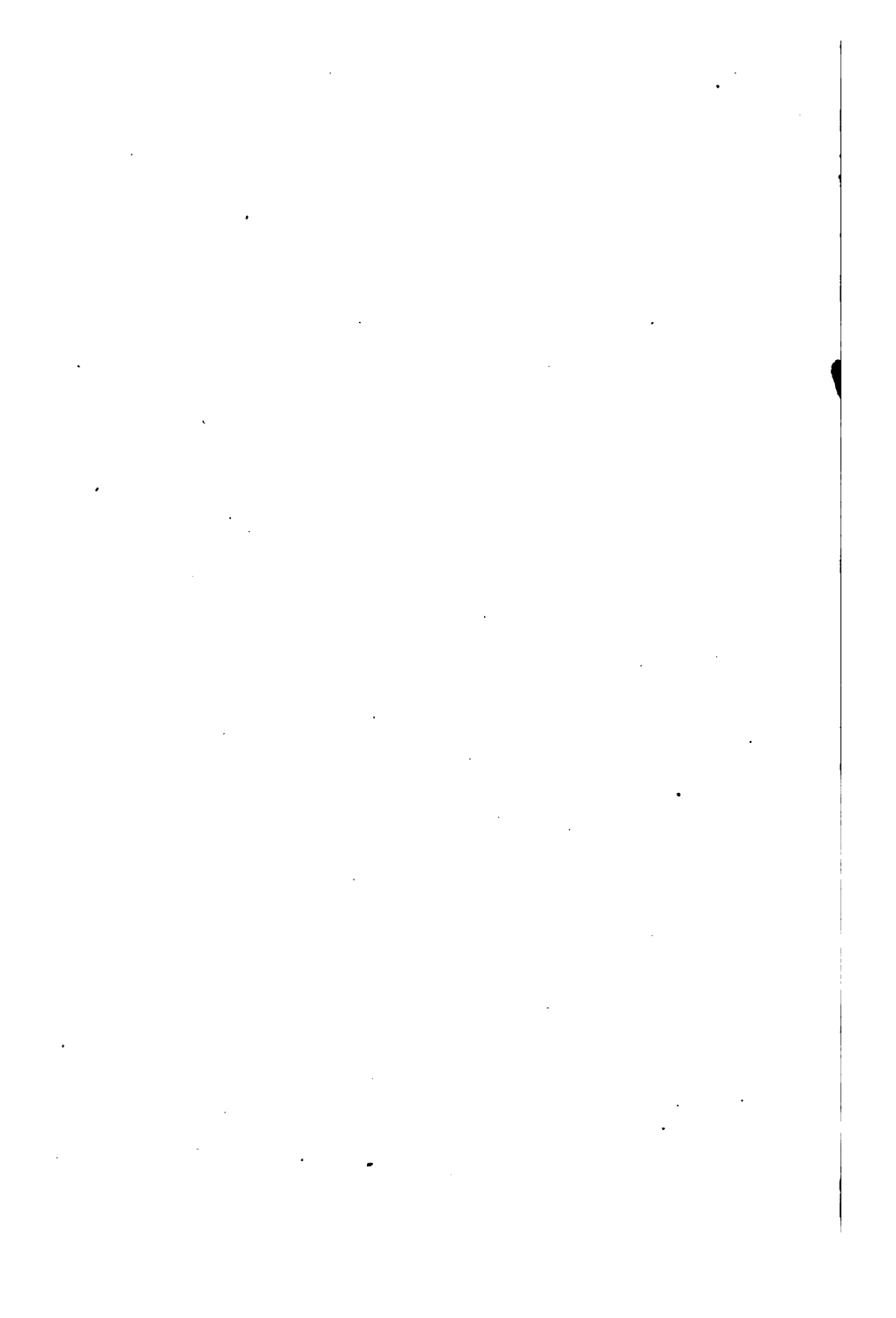
Rose looked at him suspiciously while he rubbed his cheek innocently.

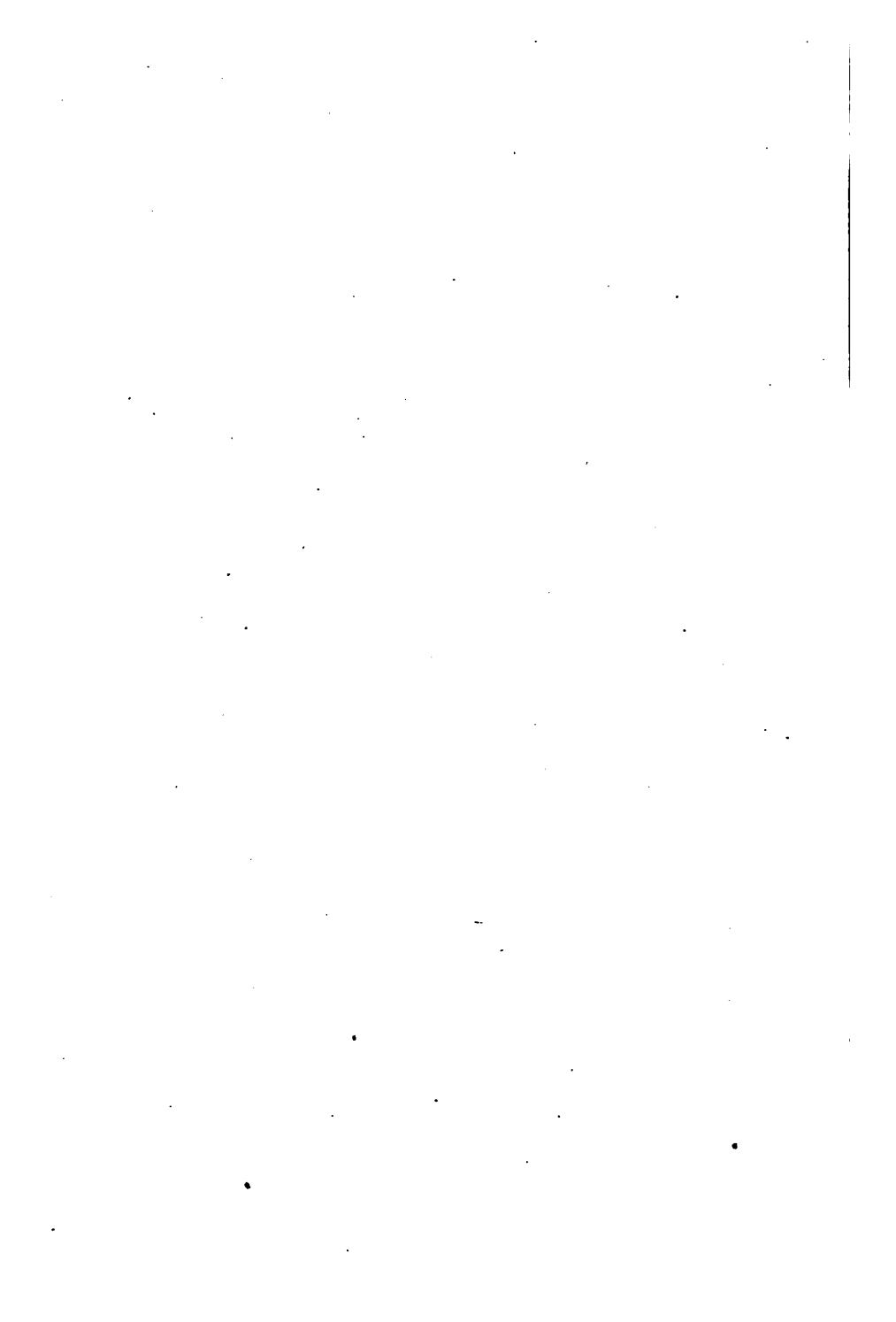
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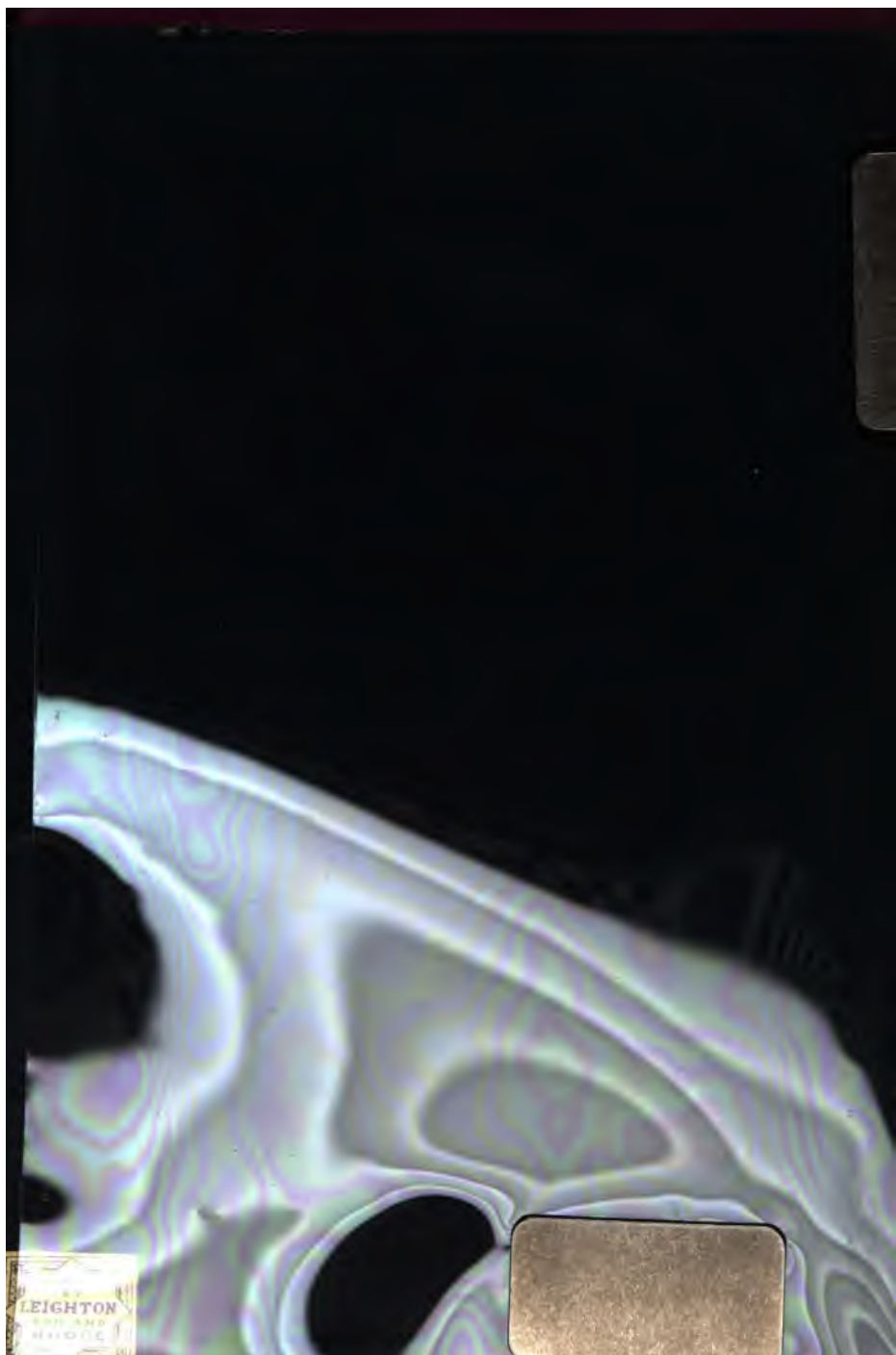
old rails as master was ordering me to black up. I ask your pardon for not washing my face before I did go to bed,— I was as tired as Dolly here. There, go you in, and say to the mistress, I come 'rectly minute."

So speaking, Jim locked the stable door almost before Rose had time to get out of the yard.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.







BY
LEIGHTON
AND
HADDON

